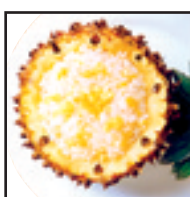


"He had a peculiar kind of arrogance that set him apart." **Page 9**



The exotic eats at Yunnan restaurants can evoke thoughts of country barbeque side dishes à la Dai. **Page 14**



Each worker willing to bare their chest on that cold November afternoon was promised payment and lunch, more financial than artistic motivations. **Page 11**



# BEIJING TODAY

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By Xiao Rong

The resort city Sanya in the southern island province of Hainan is set to benefit from the growing popularity in China of beauty pageants, with 110 beauties vying for the Miss World tiara, to be awarded tomorrow night.

Though it is the first time for China to host this international event, the 53rd Miss World competition is actually the last in a string of beauty pageants this year, including the first ever Miss China Pageant, sponsored by Phoenix TV, a Miss Shanghai Contest, the China World Model Competition and the International Advertising Model Competition.

Industry insiders are describing 2003 as the "year of the beauty contest" in China, with the country officially participating for the first time in the world's top three beauty pageants, Miss Universe, Miss International and Miss



Miss World contestants visit Beijing on November 20 as part of a whirlwind China tour.

Photo by Lu Beifeng

## Beauty and the Economy

The 'year of the pageant' marks a turning point in China's attitude to beauty contests

World. This is quite a contrast to last year, when the selection for China's Miss World entry was interrupted by a police raid due to a lack of the required permits.

The flourishing of beauty pageants this year is, according to an article by China News Agency on November 11, on one hand a result of "people's inclination to pursue beauty," and on the other due to "beauty contests becoming a medium to boost the beauty industry."

British newspaper *The Guardian* also described the "immaculately pedicured step" of the Miss World pageant into China as an attempt by organizers to "cash in on the growing embrace of commercialism and beauty," in an article on November 19. It continued, "For the central government and the municipal hosts in Sanya city, Hainan Island, the event is a chance to show how far China has opened up and to attract tourist dollars to a resort province."

Since 1999, Sanya has hosted

the finals of the New Silk Road Model Competition, one of the flagship model contests in China. The total number of tourists attracted to Sanya in 2000 was 2.06 million, while the number rose to 2.78 million last year. The city has also seen a 15 percent annual increase in its hotel accommodation rate. The prospering tourism industry has thus drawn a huge amount of investment into the city.

"It's the first time for the final of the Miss World competition to be held in Asia. The fact that Sanya can be the host city of the pageant is the result of China's social economic development and the best showcase for the economy and tourism industry of Sanya," said executive vice mayor Zhang Qi in an interview

with Sina.com.

Sanya and local businesses will cover the 70 million yuan cost of hosting the event. The city government has also invested 120 million yuan in a new exhibition hall and 100 million yuan on a "beautification campaign" to improve the city's infrastructure.

The Miss World pageant can generate revenue of around \$1.2 billion for the host region and help increase tourism revenue by 30 to 40 percent, according to the Sanya municipal government. Zhang Qi said Sanya's hosting of the Miss World competition would help build the tourism image of Sanya, improve its international status and boost the local economy.

He cited as an example the

auction of the first "golden ticket" for tomorrow's competition final. The ticket eventually fetched \$28,000, setting a new record in China for such ticket auctions.

Yunnan, Zhejiang, Sichuan and Shandong have all followed Hainan's lead hosting various kinds of beauty pageants. Shandong Tourism Bureau, organizer of this year's Miss Universe China selection contest, claimed to have "learned from Hainan" in creating its own "pageant economy."

Once regarded as bourgeois and decadent, beauty contests have made a dramatic comeback in China after an absence of 54 years. "It is a great breakthrough," said Mini Ai, a reporter from *Shanghai Youth Daily*. "In the past when we were invited to report on the contests for 'image am-

bassadors,' which were basically undeclared beauty competitions, the organizers would repeatedly emphasize that the contest was not a beauty contest."

Although pageants have become more popular, most organizers are relatively discreet and have had to play down the importance of appearance and emphasize the social role of contestants. At the Miss Shanghai contest, the final of which was held in November, the contestants promoted a host of charity causes, including visits to an orphanage and distributing milk to the elderly.

The Miss World contest in Sanya has also organized its participants to tour some key cities in China for philanthropic causes over the past month. Meanwhile appearance is no lon-

ger the top priority when it comes to selecting the winner, attitude and ability are also taken into consideration.

The All-China Women's Federation, once the most vocal opponent of beauty contests, has lately softened its stance. A spokeswoman for the federation told *Shanghai Star* on October 31 that knowledge, wisdom, elegance and moral character should come first when choosing candidates, and said the federation still opposes those kinds of pageant focusing solely on women's appearance.

"The Miss World pageant is a mature brand name aimed at spreading peace and love worldwide, which will surely help Sanya promote its image as a tourism city while gaining profit," summed up mayor of Sanya, Chen Ci.

## Tomb of 'First Emperor' Located

By Yu Shanshan

Using remote sensing technology, archeologists in Shaanxi Province have pinpointed the location of the tomb of Qinshihuang (259-210 BC), the emperor who unified China for the first time.

Duan Qingbo, director of the archeological team that conducted the survey, confirmed the find to media at a press conference in Beijing last Thursday.

Although the general location of the mausoleum has long been known to be a hill 36 kilometers to the east of Xi'an - the terracotta warriors discovered in 1973 are said to represent the Qin army guarding the emperor's tomb - its precise location and the nature of its structure have, until now, remained a mystery.

According to historical records, it took 700,000 workers 36 years to build the tomb of the founder of the Qin Dynasty, known as the first

emperor of China, where mercury was used to imitate rivers and lakes, and numerous treasures, not to mention concubines and slaves, were buried along with the dead emperor.

Apart from the discovery of the terracotta warriors in 1973, 1.5 kilometers to the east of the tomb, and two sets of large bronze chariots and horses to the west, a series of surveys conducted since the 1970s succeeded only in narrowing down the location of the underground palace to an area of 56.25 square kilometers, as big as 78 Forbidden Cities.

According to Liu Shiye of the China Geological Survey, this latest study, which began in December last year, reveals that the underground palace is a quadrangle 170 meters long from east to west and 145 meters wide from north to south, 35 meters below the surface. The coffin chamber is in the center of the palace, with a

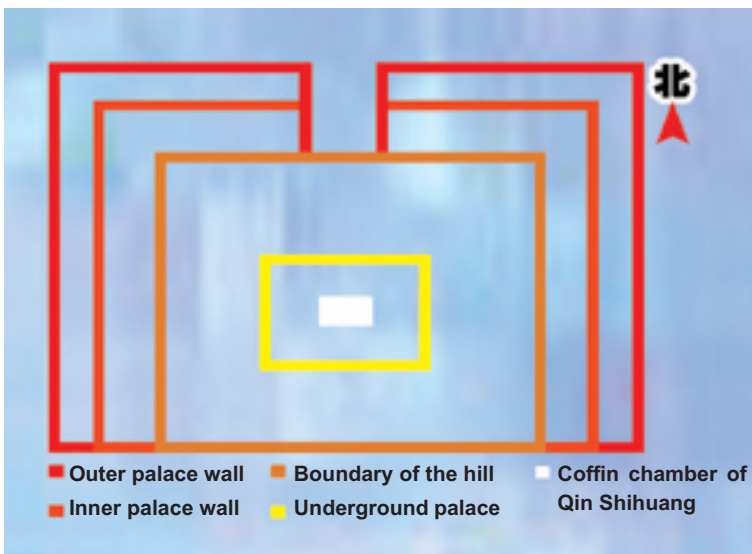
height of 15 meters, covering an area approximately the size of a football field, 80 meters by 50 meters.

The coffin chamber is ringed by a "palace wall," 145 meters long from east to west and 125 meters wide

from south to north, and 30 meters high. Around the inner side of this earthen wall, is another wall made of stone. The outer and inner walls appear to be intact, with no sign of large-scale damage, despite the fact

that the area was hit by an earthquake measuring over eight on the Richter scale on January 23, 1556.

Duan Qingbo said the survey showed that workers 2,000 years ago employed the same waterproofing principle



used in the design of the National Theater, currently under construction in Beijing. The archeologists discovered a large scale watertight wall surrounding the mausoleum, over 1,000 meters long. As the southeast of the mausoleum is higher than the northwest side, the wall prevents underground water from permeating from the higher point to the lower, thus protecting the coffin chamber.

Liu Shiye confirmed that the survey had revealed unusually high concentrations of mercury in the underground palace, lending support to the claims of rivers and lakes of mercury.

The concentration of mercury is strongest in the southeast and southwest, corresponding to the relative location of Bohai Bay and the Yellow Sea. "Qinshihuang had been to Bohai Bay, and he

probably applied his knowledge of geography in designing the layout of his underground palace," Liu said.

Qinshihuang is believed to have used mercury as it would both act as a preservative, preventing his body and funerary articles from decomposing, and deter potential grave robbers.

The tombs of China's earliest emperors and kings usually featured four paths, approaching from the north, south, east and west. However Qinshihuang's mausoleum is a different, there are only paths on the east and west sides. "It's unexpected, but not unimaginable," Duan said, "With such an iconoclastic emperor, a man who unified the country, instituted a single currency, and built himself such a dauntingly enormous tomb - who can tell what was in his mind?"

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# Ratings Agencies Assess Chinese Banks

By Wang Xiaoxiao

International credit rating agency Standard and Poor's (S & P) last Tuesday released local currency credit ratings for 12 Chinese Banks, including four banks it has already rated. In contrast, most banks were upgraded in the ratings announced Wednesday by another international rating agency, Moody's.

S & P had already given Bank of China, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and China Construction Bank a BB+ rating, and China Communication Bank a rating of BB.

The eight newly rated banks are the Agricultural Bank of China (BB), China Everbright Bank (B), China Merchants Bank (BB), China Minsheng Bank (B), Guangdong Development Bank (CCC), Huaxia Bank (B), Shanghai Pudong Development Bank (BB) and Shenzhen Development Bank (B).

The rating standard used by S & P is the "CAMEL" standard, which stands for Capital Adequacy, Asset Quality, Management, Earnings and Liquidity.

Some of the banks responded to the relatively low rankings with obvious dissatisfaction. "S & P never contacted us or asked for any data, I just can't imagine how they arrived at such a result!" said a spokesperson for Guangdong Development Bank in a report published in *Beijing Youth Daily* on November 28.

According to Moody's, the four big state-owned banks, Bank of China, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Agriculture Bank of China and China construction Bank all received an A2 credit level while other two shareholder banks, China Merchants Bank, Guangdong Development Bank were also higher rated than the S & P result. As to the Citic Industrial Bank, Moody's gave it only a rating of Baa3 for the credit rating and D- for the financial rating due to what the



Photo by Photocom

agency termed a narrow resource of capital, nearly all of which came from Citic Corporation.

Yan Xuwei, vice president of the Asia Pacific Region of Moody's said, because of different rating standards used by the two companies, the results might be different. However, he emphasized that the five listed banks operated better than the state-owned banks because they could create different "inspiration" mechanisms.

Professor Qu Qiang, director of the Applied Finance Department of Renmin University commented, "Chinese banks don't have a high credit level because of the high level of non-performing loans, which is very important for the safety of the man-

agement of a commercial bank. But the fact that Chinese banks are in a position of monopolization is not considered by S & P. The result to a certain degree reflects the problems existing in most Chinese banks."

Li Peng from Renmin University's Finance School said the lack of transparency within Chinese banks in terms of financial data, and the fact that data is not dealt with in the same way as in foreign banks was a factor in the poor ratings. Also, the lack of communication between the banks and the rating agency was another reason for the unsatisfactory result.

At a press conference held by the general office of the State Council last Monday, Liu Mingkang, chairman of

the China Banking Regulatory Commission disclosed that the People's Bank of China and the commission were considering setting up China's own credit rating organization.

However Professor Qu Qiang argued that it made no sense for the banking industry to set up such an organization itself. "A rating agency only exists as part of the market and should be tested by the market itself for a long time, without any relationship with the government," he said. Li Peng added, "China has several local rating organizations, which are not well developed, because of small demand. Justice is the key thing for a rating company to work, and most of the foreign rating companies are privately owned."

## Poorly Performing Departments Named in Internet Poll

By Ji Runju

The latest results of an online poll on government performance at the official website of the municipal government ([www.beijing.gov.cn](http://www.beijing.gov.cn)) shows that the Beijing Education Committee, Beijing Local Taxation Bureau and the Beijing Township Enterprise Bureau rate highest in terms of popular support.

The online poll, which opened on November 18, is a first for the Beijing government as a means of collecting comments via the Internet on the performance of its key departments.

Sixty departments were listed on the website, around half of which have recorded a dissatisfaction rate of 50 percent or more. The Traffic, Public Health and Urban Planning committees received the lowest scores, with dissatisfaction rates of 86, 76 and 75 percent respectively.

A few departments with high dissatisfaction rates have made positive reactions to the poll result. Beijing Traffic Bureau spokesman Liu Xiaoming told the press Monday that the traffic problems are the joint work of several departments, and the high dissatisfaction rate among the Beijing residents reflects the bad traffic situation in the city. The committee will hold a special press conference to announce measures to improve traffic conditions, he added.

Beijing Urban Planning Committee has posted a notice on its official website ([www.bjghw.gov.cn](http://www.bjghw.gov.cn)) to solicit opinions from the public, and all the reasonable ideas and suggestions will be introduced to improve the work next year, it says.

Fang Zhulan, from the Social Research Center, Renmin University told *Beijing Times* last Sunday that the dissatisfaction rate does not simply mean that these departments were doing a bad job. They could be a reflection of the poor communications channel between the department and the public. Fang hopes the online poll will become a regular event, and said the public wants better communication with the government and hopes their ideas could be adopted by the officials.

## CBRC Expands RMB Business

By Wang Xiaoxiao

As of Monday this week, four more cities have been opened to foreign banks to conduct Renminbi (RMB) business. The four cities, Jinan, Fuzhou, Chengdu and Chongqing, join the nine cities already on the list, namely Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tianjin, Dalian, Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Qingdao, Nanjing and Wuhan.

In the past, foreign banks were only permitted to provide RMB services for foreign enterprises and individuals, as well as Hong Kong and Macao citizens, but with the acceleration of China's opening up of its banking sector, these restrictions are being relaxed.

Simultaneously, the Chinese

Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) is revising the regulations governing foreign-funded financial Institutions, so as to strengthen cooperation between foreign and Chinese banks.

The CBRC is also to make amendments to the current six-level arrangement for operating capital requirements, by reducing the minimum requirement for the highest level from 600 million yuan to 500 million yuan, and for the second highest level from 400 million yuan to 300 million yuan.

Consequently, the six-level arrangement will be replaced by a five-level arrangement in practice. In respect to the operating capital requirements for branches

of locally incorporated foreign-owned banks and Sino-foreign joint venture banks, the CBRC is to replace the current six-level arrangement with a three-level one and reduce the minimum requirement for each level to 100 million, 200 million and 300 million respectively.

Furthermore, the CBRC has been authorized by the State Council to increase the equity share of a single foreign investor to 20 percent from the previous 15 percent, and so long as the equity share of the total foreign investment in a financial institution is lower than 25 percent, the nature and business scope of the targeted institution remains unchanged.

## Five-year Plan Research Topics Announced

By Dong Nan

After a one-month appraisal, the final result of bidding for the Eleventh Five-year Plan research topics was published on the homepage of the National Development and Reform Commission ([www.sdpc.gov.cn](http://www.sdpc.gov.cn)). A total of 56 items have been selected. This is the first time public bidding has been invited for a long-term development schedule for the economy and society.

The selected items involve various areas of society, mainly employment, education and agriculture, and include the problem of public infrastructure in rural areas, put forward by Jiangxi Financial and Economy University; national envi-

ronment strategy research, put forward by Huanan Environment Science Graduate School; North East China development policy, put forward by the Liaoning Academy of Social Sciences; and the influence of neo-industrialization on employment in China in the coming five years, put forward by Renmin University's college of economics.

The National Development and Reform Commission invited bids from September 27 to October 30, and received 350 bidding schedules from 260 organizations. Most of them were from universities and research academies, including Beijing University, Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University and the Chinese Academy of

Social Science.

The State Council asked for suggestions from the general public when mapping out the Tenth Five-year Plan, five years ago, but this is the first time bids have been called for in this way. "It is the government buying thoughts and good ideas from the people," remarked Yang Weimin, director of the programming department of the National Development and Reform Commission.

The State Council has released a "Five-year Plan" every five years since 1955, dealing with the most important schedules and timetables of China's macro economic and social development.

## Privately-owned Credit Enterprise Established

By Chen Si

Shenzhen-based Credit Orientwise, the largest domestic privately-owned credit enterprise, opened a branch in Beijing last Wednesday, according to a *China Youth Daily* report last Friday.

Beijing Credit Orientwise has signed a cooperation agreement with Beijing City Commercial Bank, Huaxia Bank and China Everbright Bank.

Board chairman Sun Jiaqi said in the report that some enterprises lack

funds in their developing period, especially high-tech and private-owned enterprises. "The purpose of the credit company is to provide funds to those with good prospects but unable to get a bank loan due to lack of guaranty," Sun said, "Such companies account for 60 percent of those that need loans."

According to statistics quoted in *Beijing Youth Daily* last Thursday, 25 credit companies have formally registered in Beijing, and the registration fund adds up to over four

billion yuan. These companies have provided nearly 13.8 billion yuan to over 3,000 enterprises in the past three years. However, these credit companies cannot meet the financing need of many small and medium sized enterprises. Among the 10 thousand such enterprises, less than 500 have secured loans from banks in the past three years. Due to the flexibility of privately-owned credit companies, more small and medium sized enterprises are likely to get loans from them.

### Public Security Review

#### Public Security Review

By Wang Xiaoxiao

The number of criminal cases reported on the 110 emergency hotline last week fell by 11.1 percent on the previous week, according to the Beijing Public Security Bureau.

Of the crimes reported, theft, particularly pickpockets, car theft and burglaries were the most prominent.

Most of the break-ins reported occurred around Anzhen in Chaoyang District; Beitapingzhuang, Yangfangdian and Qinghe in Haidian District; and Fengtaizhen and Dahongmen in Fengtai District between midnight and dawn.

Most of the auto thefts occurred in Xicheng, Chaoyang, Haidian and Fengtai districts, with basic-model Santanas, minibuses and motorbikes accounting for the majority of cases.

Most robberies occurred in the evening or at night, Dongfeng and Chaowai in Chaoyang District; Sijiqing in Haidian District; Fangzhuang and Dahongmen in Fengtai District reported the highest incidence of robberies.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

### Tourism Industry Sees Increase Despite SARS

By Zhao Hongyi

Despite the impact of the SARS epidemic, China's tourism industry has achieved revenues of 34.6 billion yuan in the first ten months this year, according to Hu Guoyou, secretary general of the China Association of Travel Services.

Hu announced the figures at the "2003 Beijing Youth Daily Tourism Industry Symposium" held on November 28 and 29 in Beijing. But analysts warned of difficulties ahead if the industry failed to change business concepts and structures.

"Most of the revenue comes from domestic and external tours," Hu said. "We have seen a great loss in the inflow of overseas travelers."

Wang Qing, marketing director of the Beijing Tourism Administration, confirmed Hu's analysis, saying that SARS had caused a loss of tens of million yuan to the city's tourism industry. "We have made great efforts, including image promotion on London buses and in the subways of Tokyo. But it will take time (to recover)."

Du Jiang, president of Beijing International Studies University warned that the industry has to alter its business concepts, from the traditional three segments to a vertical categorization based on travel agencies' scales, market positions and functions.

"We need a pyramid structure of the travel service industry, with only a dozen large scale ones as the wholesalers at the national level, tens of mid-sized ones as brokers at the provincial level and hundreds, maybe thousands, of small ones."

### Framework Set for Asset Management Commission

By Chen Si

The framework of the Beijing State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (BSASAC), including the duties of each department and main principals, was finalized on Monday last week, according to a report in the following day's *Beijing Business Today*.

Bai Jinrong, vice director of the BSASAC said there were five main points for next year's work: Setting up a new state-owned possession management framework, hastening the adjustment of state-owned economy distribution; speeding up the adjustment of authorization and management of state-owned possession; deepening the reform of state-owned enterprises, setting up a modern enterprise system; and setting up incentive and restriction systems for enterprise managers.

According to the report, in 2004, the BSASAC plans to finish the investigation of state-owned possession distribution and establish an adjustment plan. To date, it is in charge of 4,050 enterprises, the stocks of which are controlled by the state, and state-owned possession totals 138 billion yuan.

By the end of this year or early 2004, the BSASAC will have established a clear examination system and defined the management range of leaders in state-owned enterprises after investigating their salaries.

### Counter-Money Laundering Taskforce Gets US Training

By Dong Nan

A group of employees from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange have returned from the US after receiving training in counter-money laundering techniques, an official from the administration told *Beijing Today* Tuesday.

This is the first time the administration has organized such a training course abroad. Twenty-one trainees have finished it and come back earlier last month, said an official of State Administration of Foreign Exchange of China to *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

The trainees, whose average age is 31, are from the administration and branch bureaus in 12 provinces, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Security.

During the two-week course, they took nine special lectures from 14 experts from the US Federal Legislation Department, Treasury Department, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, US Customs and the Federal Reserve Bank. The content of the lectures included legislation on money laundering and counter-money laundering organizations in US, issues related to money laundering in the financial area and international cooperation.

"Since all of us are from the front line of counter-money laundering, what we learnt in US will be of great help for our practical work," said one participator in the course to *Beijing Today*, although he declined to reveal any specific details.

The course is the result of moves by the People's Bank of China to step up the fight against money laundering, initiated earlier this year. The State Administration of Foreign Exchange says it will organize similar training courses for its staff in the future.





Sticker prices of new domestically-assembled BMW 530i sedans start at 698,000 yuan.

Photo by Bqb

# BMW 5-Series Cars Released

By Sun Ling

BMW and domestic automaker Brilliance unveiled a new entrant in China's competitive luxury car bracket, locally-assembled BMW 530i sedans, on November 29. Though the cars at priced at a hefty 698,000 yuan

each, dealers in Beijing received more than 200 orders for the high-tech autos on their first day on the market.

In March, BMW and Brilliance China Automotive signed a 450 million euro deal to establish a 50-50 joint venture for the assembly and sale of BMW

3-Series and 5-Series cars. The venture company's first product, the BMW 325i, was launched in October with a base price of 473,850 yuan and has proven popular on the domestic market.

"There is enormous momentum building up in China," said Dr. Helmut

Panke, chairman of the board of BMW. "The key message to our customers in China is if you are interested in a BMW, you can get the same quality car made to BMW's standards and specifications here. It is not a question of losing the brand's cachet."

## Bertelsmann Sets Up JV Book Chain

By Shan Jinliang

Germany-based media giant Bertelsmann AG announced in Beijing on Wednesday that it will acquire a 40 percent stake in the Beijing 21st Century Book Chain, making that company China's first joint venture book retail chain.

The acquisition has been approved by the State Press and Publication Press (SPPA) and the Ministry of Commerce following the SPPA's issuance of an opening-up policy to permit foreign investors access to China's publication retail market on May 1.

Beijing 21st Century Book Chain holds a 44 percent share in the new venture and Shanghai Bertelsmann Culture Industry Corporation, the German company's first joint venture in China, controls a 40 percent stake. The decision to set up the venture was the direct result of China's booming book retail market, which is growing at an annual rate of 18 percent, said Christian Unger, president of Bertelsmann China on Wednesday.

Unger denied rumors that his company had talked with other Chinese book retailers such as Xinhua Bookstore and that the two sides had started cooperating by setting up the first Bertelsmann Club Center in Beijing's Haidian District at the end of last year.

The 21st Century Book Chain operates around 20 stores in China. One third of those make money, one third break even, and one third lose money, so the new joint venture would focus on managing small stores and shaping them into Bertelsmann Club Centers, said Luo Ruiren, former chairman of the 21st Century Book Chain, who will assume the post of chairman of the new joint venture, at a press conference held for the formation of the new joint venture on Wednesday in Beijing. "We might keep quite a few big stores as flagships, but bad-performing outlets will likely be sold," he added.

Unger said the joint venture would open new stores outside Shanghai, the location of all six Bertelsmann Club Centers, but both sides of the new venture have remained quiet on the speed with which new stores will be opened.

Since entering the China market eight years ago, Bertelsmann China has consistently lost money, but has announced determination to break even by the end of this year. Unger said the profit margin from book sales in China is 10 percent to 20 percent lower than in other countries, though he added he believed such discrepancies would disappear as China opened wider to the outside world.



Bertelsmann China President Christian Unger (left) and Luo Ruiren, chairman of the new venture.

Photo by Xiao Shan

## BNP Paribas China Becomes Fully-foreign Owned

By Shan Jinliang

The establishment of Shanghai-based BNP Paribas China, the first wholly-foreign owned bank in this country, was announced last Wednesday in Shanghai. The new bank was created following the withdrawal of its former Chinese shareholder, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC).

The news was released by Michel Pébereau, chairman of France's BNP Paribas Group, upon his visit to China. The ground-breaking company was established with the regulatory approval of the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC), the company said.

The bank's predecessor, the International Bank of Paris and Shanghai, was established through joint and equal investment of \$30 million each by BNP Paribas and the ICBC in 1992.

## First Foreign-funded Travel Agency Opens

By Sun Ming

Jalpak International, the first wholly foreign-funded travel agency in China, opened for business in Beijing on Tuesday.

The travel agency, affiliated with the Japan Airlines Group, has 5 million yuan in registered capital and will focus on bringing Japanese tour groups to China.

Jalpak President Kaji Akihiko said on Tuesday that his company brought 25,000 tourists to China last year through its Beijing office and hopes to raise that number to 60,000 a year.

Jalpak International received approval to open the agency on July 18 last year, a week after a temporary rule issued by the National Tourism Administration and the Ministry of Commerce came into effect.

That rule lifted the previous ban on setting up foreign share-controlled or wholly-owned tourism agencies in China, although it still prevents such agencies from dealing in tours of Chinese citizens to Hong Kong and Macao.

Foreign companies and investors are allowed to open travel agencies in the cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Xi'an.

BNP Paribas became the first foreign bank granted to run Chinese RMB business in 1997, at which point its registered capital was increased to \$60 million while the shareholders' stakes remained unchanged.

At the end of this October, the two partners exchanged documents and BNP Paribas China officially received ICBC's 50 percent stake in the company, making it the full shareholder. ICBC has refused to release the price of the share transfer, but has told the press that the two former partners would uphold their sound relations.

An unnamed source from ICBC told the *Beijing Times* that BNP Paribas China showed steady development in the past over 10 years and has taken a leading position in the ranks of Sino-foreign joint venture banks.

## IBM Makes Foray into Internet Cafe Arena

By Tony Shaw

International Business Machines Corporation entered China's Internet cafe chain industry after signing a memo of agreement in Beijing last Tuesday with China Asia United Telecom and Network (China AUTNC).

The memo makes IBM the first foreign company to operate in the domestic Internet cafe industry and has heated up competition with Chinese computer makers including Founder and Bayi Space Computer in the Internet cafe computer supply market.

According to the memo, IBM will provide China AUTNC with personal computers, servers and other hardware and software products to equip its Internet cafe chain outlets.

China AUTNC is one of the 10 franchised Internet cafe chain operators in China and its cooperation with IBM represents a new business model, IBM Industrial Department Greater China General Manager Zheng Xiaocong told the press in Beijing last week. He added that IBM would provide comprehensive products and services, the key components being financial solutions to allow China AUTNC to pay for the purchased products in installments.

An employee from IBM's public

Xie Haitao, BNP Paribas China president said at a press conference held last week, "The bank's business scope is no different from that of other foreign banks, and although we are a Chinese legal representative, the CBRC treats us like a foreign bank. We hope the CBRC will treat us as a domestic bank."

Compared to its predecessor, BNP Paribas China has a wider business base with an increased registered capital figure of 555 million yuan and an expanded scope of business, according to BNP Paribas' worldwide website.

BNP Paribas China will conduct RMB business with foreign invested enterprises, foreign representative offices, foreign nationals and select Chinese enterprises. It will also be able to handle all manner of foreign currency business for its customers.

relations department told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that the first outlet equipped with IBM products would open in the near future in the Dongdan. China AUTNC told the *China Economic Times* on Monday that it had planned to open the flagship store in late November, but due to the complicated approval process, the outlet was more likely to open at the end of this month or early next year.

The growing popularity of online gaming has shorten the lifespan of Internet cafe computers to 1.5 years on average, the *China Economic Times* reported on Monday, and the current nationwide Internet cafe PC market volume of 8 billion yuan is expected to rocket to 22 billion soon, one clear reason for IBM to make a foray into the market.

Domestic computer companies have not been ignoring this burgeoning market. Lenovo released a line of PCs for Internet cafes this August and established a strategic alliance with the Zhejiang-based Freeland chain one month later. Founder Technology has started to push its own Internet cafe solutions, while Bayi Space Computer became the designated supplier of Internet cafe equipment and services to Beijing-based Qianlong Internet cafes this October.

## Fly Direct from Guangzhou to Paris

By Sun Ming

China Southern and Air France signed a code-sharing agreement in Guangzhou last Wednesday for a Paris-Guangzhou route that will be launched on January 5 next year by the French airline.

The direct flights from Paris to Guangzhou will make Air France the first European airline to fly to the largest city in southern China. Air France already operates direct flights from the French capital to Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai.

The Paris-Guangzhou flights will take off five days a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, from January 5 until June 13. Daily service will begin on June 14.

"Air France is determined to maintain its position as Chinese people's preferred European airline," said Patrick Alexandre, executive vice president of international commercial affairs for the airline at the agreement signing ceremony in Guangzhou.

## Two Chinese Make 2003 Global Influentials List

By Ji Runjun

On November 23, *Time* Magazine and CNN TV news network released their new 2003 Global Business Influentials list, which includes executives from some of the world's largest companies and two surprise entrants, Chinese entrepreneurs Victor Li and Lu Weiding.

Li, 39, is a graduate of Stanford University, the managing director and deputy chairman of real estate giant Cheung Kong and expected heir to the business empire established by his father, Hong Kong billionaire Li Kashing. In addition to property, Cheung Kong and its sister company Hutchison Whampoa control third-generation mobile-phone networks in Europe as well as the world's largest port operation and telecom networks, supermarkets and pharmacies in their home city of Hong Kong. Last month Victor Li became the largest single shareholder in Air Canada.

Lu Weiding, 32, educated in Singapore, is the CEO of Wanxiang Group. His father, Lu Guanqiu, developed Wanxiang into a \$1 billion auto-parts supplier that controls the biggest privately run firm on the domestic stock exchange and now operates factories in the US that supply parts to the Big Three automakers. The younger Lu is expected to take over the family business upon his father's retirement.

## Local Cars Head to Vietnam on Promotional Tour

By Shan Jinliang

On December 16, a fleet of eight locally-produced cars will set off on a one-month promotional drive that will take them through southern China and into Vietnam. The cars will return to Beijing on January 1. The aim of the tour is to raise the image of Beijing-made automobiles in Vietnam's emerging market.

The China-Southeast Asia New Century Tour 2003-2004 is the second tour to the region and will pass through Hebei, Henan, Hubei and Guangxi on the way to the final destination of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The planned extension of the tour into Cambodia has been canceled due to security reasons, Lu Zhiguang, a senior official with the Chinese Auto Industry Association, one of the organizers of the tour, told *Beijing Today* last Friday.

The first southern circuit tour, launched in December 2000, drove through parts of Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand, leading to some technical exchange agreements and a few appearances by the Beijing vehicles at regional auto shows.

An analyst from *China Automotive News* surmised Yang told *Beijing Today* the event would have little significance because Vietnam has low rates of auto consumption. He argued that motorcycles and agricultural vehicles would be more suitable for promotion than cars.

## Good Neighbor Stores Renamed

By David Huang

The trademark of stores under the flag of US-based Beatrice Good Neighbor and locally operated by Beijing Wanfang KPI Retail Management Company will be changed to represent the chain's new service model in the middle of this month.

Tao Yi, director of the company's strategic development department, told *Beijing Business Today* on Monday that after the change, the chain shops will be renamed Hi-24 Chain Convenience Stores, representing their move to 24-hour services.

According to Tao, the company has massive expansion plans set for next year. There are currently 44 Hi-24 stores in Beijing and that number is slated to rise to 400 in only the next three years. Some analysts have speculated that the fast expansion of the Hi-24 chain could pose a serious threat to the city's leading supermarket retailer, Wu-Mart.

## Financial Street Gets New Logo

By James Liu

A golden 8-shaped logo was erected on Wednesday on Jinrong Jie, Beijing's financial center also known as Financial Street, as a replacement to the former logo of "JR," the initials of the Chinese word for finance. Financial Street, which runs north from the intersection of Chang'an Avenue and the West Second Ring Road in Xicheng District, is home to the headquarters of the nation's central bank, major commercial banks and supervising committees of the financial industry.

Designer Zhang Yuchun of Guangdong Province, creator of the logo, received 80,000 yuan for the transfer of the intellectual property rights for its permanent use on the street. Construction of the Financial Street region is scheduled to be completed in 2007, according to the developer's plans.



# UN Plans for Poorest AIDS Sufferers

Nairobi, November 30 (Reuters) - The United Nations unveiled plans on Monday to rush life-saving anti-retroviral AIDS drugs to three million of the world's poor in a \$5.5 billion emergency strategy to fight a disease now killing 8,000 a day.

"The lives of millions of people are at stake. This strategy demands massive and unconventional efforts to make sure they stay alive," World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Lee Jong-wook said in a statement to mark World Aids Day.

"Preventing and treating AIDS may be the toughest health assignment the world has faced, but it is also the most urgent."

The world body announced last week that 40 million people around the world are infected with HIV, and that the global AIDS epidemic shows no signs of abating.

The UN's WHO estimates that six million people in poor countries are in immediate need of the anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment that many developed world sufferers now take for granted, but less than 300,000 actually receive it.

The strategy requires getting ARV treatment to half of the six million by the end of 2005.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan thinks many political leaders still simply do not care enough to fight the disease, which has killed 28 million people since it was first reported among homosexual men in the United States in 1981.

Experts said a pillar of the plan will be a vast increase in the manufacture and distribution of combination therapy ARVs under which sufferers need only take two pills a day.

It is a simpler treatment regime

than standard developed world programs which require eight or more pills a day, and means compliance by patients in poor countries should be good.

(William Maclean)

**Analysts' Take:**

China has 840,000 HIV/AIDS virus carriers and 80,000 AIDS patients, according to the estimate by the Ministry of Health and UNAIDS China.

There are high numbers of carriers in certain population groups and areas, such as drug addicts, prostitutes and blood donors and receivers. The worst-hit areas included Yunnan with a large population of drug addicts and Guangdong province where there is a highly mobile population. Henan province has also been hit hard by blood donors contracting the disease in huge numbers.

The HIV/AIDS carriers are facing a rising death rate in the years to

come. The epidemic is on the brink of expanding from specific groups into the mass population.

We have advantages in combating HIV/AIDS, such as the support from the central government including a special budget of over 200 million yuan for free treatment and locally created and produced anti-virus medicines.

But difficulties also exist. Discrimination towards AIDS patients prevents them from revealing their condition and seeking treatment. Whether due to lack of knowledge or funds, a great number of sufferers do not get medical treatment. We still lack enough experienced doctors and nurses. But professional training is under way and this situation is expected to be remedied in the near future.

— Shao Yiming, chief scientist, National Center for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention

## SEC to Shut Mutual Fund Trading Window

Washington, December 3 (Reuters) - The US Securities and Exchange Commission moved on Wednesday to slam the door on a mutual fund industry practice that has allowed illegal late trading to flourish, cheating investors who play by the rules.

The SEC voted 5-0 to propose that fund companies no longer accept buy and sell orders after markets close, usually at 4 pm EST, for trades to occur at that day's price.

If formally adopted, the proposal would end a practice in the \$7 trillion mutual fund industry in which funds have accepted same-day orders after the market close from intermediaries, such as brokerages, which are supposed to ensure that the orders were placed with them before the close.

(Kevin Drawbaugh)



Ashikaga Bank President Yoshiaki Higano, left, bows with other senior officials at a news conference. AP Photo

## State Takes Over Ashikaga

Tokyo, December 1 (AFP) - Japan put insolvent regional lender Ashikaga Bank under state control while the Bank of Japan said it would inject one trillion yen (\$9.2 billion) into the short-term money market to ensure stability in the financial system.

In 1998 and 1999, Tokyo injected 135 billion yen into Ashikaga Bank as part of the government's program to revive Japan's fragile financial system but the money would "very likely be irrecoverable."

While major Japanese banks are improving their balance sheets, regional banks are still hamstrung by deteriorating non-performing loans.

## South Korean Trade Surplus Hits Record High

Seoul, December 1 (AFP) - South Korea posted a trade surplus of \$2.87 billion in November, the highest monthly figure in 59 months due to brisk exports.

The surplus for the 11 months to November rose to \$13.45 billion from a surplus of \$1.2 billion a year ago, the Ministry of Industry and Energy said. It forecast this year's trade surplus would reach \$15 billion.

The four major parts of South Korea's exports are semiconductors, automobiles, wireless telecom equipment and computers.

The country's foreign currency reserve has climbed to \$150.339 billion, ranking it fourth after Japan, China and Taiwan.

## Tiny Bhutan Aims to Become Smoke-free

Thimphu, Bhutan, November 24 (The Christian Science Monitor) - Bhutan, a landlocked Buddhist kingdom, aims to become the world's first tobacco-free nation.

Out of 20 districts in the country, 19 have already banned the leaf, often on religious grounds. Thimphu, the capital is to follow suit next year.

In the world's poorest welfare state, stores in the capital have stopped selling tobacco products. Smokers have been forced to buy imported Indian cigarettes that cost more than 100 Indian rupees (\$2).

(Simon Montlake)



4Ever Best Friends Reuters Photo

## New Threat to Barbie

New York, December 3 (Reuters) - MGA Entertainment, the toymaker whose Bratz sent Barbie back to the drawing board, is rolling out its next round of fashion dolls just before Christmas.

The privately held toymaker is launching 4Ever Best Friends, a line of dolls that come two to a box, holding hands and marketed as "best friends."

"No doll is the same. They are on a matrix, so no combinations of skin tone, hair color, eye color, and fashions are the same," said Isaac Larian, founder and CEO of MGA Entertainment. "We are very excited."

(Angela Moore)

## AT&T Shifts Personnel

December 3 (USA Today) - Long-distance giant AT&T hopes to usher in an era of growth - an elusive goal in its industry - as telecom and travel veteran William Hannigan succeeds Betsy Bernard as president of AT&T and head of the AT&T unit that serves its business customers.

The change, announced Tuesday, ends Bernard's three-year return engagement at the company that launched her telecom career more than a quarter century ago. Hannigan, who resigned as CEO and chairman of Sabre Holdings (TSG), now gets the challenge of trying to reverse business revenue declines. The market, hurt by price wars and too many competitors, has yet to feel the economic recovery.

"At this stage we have no reason to believe that the departure is performance related, other than the fact that managing a business with declining revenues and undergoing consequent downsizing is presumably not as enjoyable as some other alternatives," a Merrill Lynch research report says.

While some observers speculated that the change stemmed from AT&T Chairman and CEO Dave Dorman's effort to streamline management and install his own team, Dorman and Bernard, 48, say her exit is unrelated to the shake-up. She just wants to be a CEO.

(Andrew Backover)

**Boeing Recalls Stonecipher After CEO Resigns**

Chicago, December 1 (AFP) - Boeing chairman and chief executive Phil Condit abruptly resigned, a week after the aerospace giant fired its chief financial officer in the latest fallout from a series of ethics scandals.

The company's board of directors recalled former Boeing vice chairman Harry Stonecipher from retirement to take over as president and chief executive officer -- effective immediately.

**Disney Resigns**

Disneyland, California, December 2 (WESHNewsChannel2000.com) - Walt Disney's nephew, Roy Disney, resigned Sunday from the Disney board. This marks the departure of the last family member in the group.

Mr. Disney also called for CEO Michael Eisner to step down. Roy Disney brought in Eisner in 1984 to help prevent a hostile takeover of the corporation.



Michael Eisner Reuters Photo

"He brought Michael Eisner in by resigning before. Is history repeating itself?" said Richard Fogelson, who has studied the company for several years.

### Analysts' Take:

Reshuffles of corporate senior management teams are common in the US, particularly after years of rapid business expansion.

Poor performance and lack of continued growth are the major reasons for the recent reshuffles, which can break the increasingly strangling bureaucracy that builds up after periods of business expansion.

They also provide chances for the supervising authorities to conduct inspections of internal business accounting and operating practices and to secure a healthier restart afterwards.

Theoretically, a reshuffle should be made every two years. Since the beginning of this year, most of the IT and hi-tech US companies have seen their share prices increase by 20-30 percent. Therefore, reshuffles are quite understandable.

— Ma Xiaoye, director, Shanghai Academy of World Watch



An aerial view shows the flooded southern French city of Arles. France's second-biggest city Marseille and its surrounding area were declared disaster zones as lashing rain caused floods. (AFP/Xinhua Photo)

## Lithuanian President Faces Impeachment

Vilnius, December 1 (AFP) - Lithuanian President Rolandas Paksas faced almost certain impeachment, but refused to resign after a damning report said he posed a threat to state security given mafia links in his office.

"I will definitely not resign. I do not feel guilty. I feel I am in the right," Paksas told AFP by telephone, after the report by a committee of inquiry prompted the two ruling coalition parties to urge him to step down gracefully.

In a 10-page report, the parliamentary committee listed six areas in which Paksas or his office had shady links.

"The president was, and still is, vulnerable," it said.

Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas, who backed Paksas in the early stages of the crisis, and who heads the biggest party in parliament, recommended Paksas now step down.

The committee of inquiry was set up a month ago to investigate a possible threat to state security after a security services report

alleged the president's office had links to the mafia.

In a six-point report lodged with the parliament, the committee said a shady Russian-registered public relations company, suspected of links with the Russian secret services "was and still is exercising influence over the president's office."

It also frowned on Paksas' "exclusive" relations with his main financial backer in his election campaign -- Jurijus Borisovas -- a Russian who was accused in the security services report of trading arms to Sudan.

**Analysts' Take:**

Clearly, the president is believed to have close relations with the mafia from Russia. This would be one clear reason for his resignation. But another is the attempt by former Soviet republics to cut their ties with Russia.

Latest reports say the Moldovan opposition is demanding its president Vladimir Voronin resign if he

signs a Russian peace plan to settle the longstanding conflict between Moldova and its breakaway republic of Transnistria. The resignation of Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze is another example.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new independent states around Russia have been in turmoil. Their economies have been in stagnation, further increasing instability.

Russia has been put in a defensive position on the issue of its neighbors. But the relations between Russia and its neighbors cannot be cut in a short time considering the traditional political, cultural, economic and social interdependence.

Russia is focusing on its economic development now. It is trying to entice its neighbors back into the fold, replacing the traditional close ties with normal state-to-state relations.

— Yang Li, researcher of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Institute of International Studies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs



# Moscow Fire Sparks Sympathy, Aid

By Dong Nan

Over the past week, the Chinese government and people have reacted with sympathy and offers of help to the November 24 blaze at the Patrice Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow that killed nine Chinese students. Four Chinese remain missing and 43 are receiving treatment for injuries at Moscow hospitals. The fire took the lives of dozens of foreign students and injured scores.

The day of the fire, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education organized a special working group that flew to Moscow on November 27 to

console survivors and handle related affairs.

"The Chinese government will do everything it can to help relatives of those students go to Russia," an anonymous Ministry of Foreign Affairs official told CCTV on November 25.

The fire broke out around 2:50 am and left at least 37 students dead and another around 200 injured and hospitalized at 11 Moscow hospitals. Among the Chinese victims, one of the dead and three of the injured are from Beijing.

A push by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also led the visa of-

fice of the Russian Embassy to agree to issue free visas to relatives of students at the Russian university. To date, over 50 people have received visas and 43 have gone to Moscow.

Over the week, *Beijing Youth Daily* ran a special report on the tragic story of Beijing-native Li Sirui, who was killed in the blaze. Li's parents are both laid-off workers and had to borrow large amounts of money from relatives to send their son abroad to study. The fire occurred the same day Li moved into the dormitory from a friend's home.

Li's bereaved parents told *Beijing Youth Daily* that their



Chen Nanhua was hospitalized for one day when she collapsed this weekend after hearing her son, Li Sirui (center of inset picture) in the dormitory fire in Moscow.  
Photo by Jia Ting

only wish is "to build Sirui a grave in a sunny place," but all the family's money has already gone to pay for his tuition.

Following the publication of the report, many people have contacted

*Beijing Youth Daily* to offer help.

On Saturday, Chen Nanhua, Li's mother, lost consciousness and was sent to hospital by her neighbors. When the taxi driver and doctors found out she was

the mother of the local student that died in the Moscow fire, they all refused to take her money. She was released from the hospital the next day in healthy condition.

## Where, Oh Where, Can Our Big Dog Go?

By Yu Shanshan

The launch of the Beijing police's annual canine inspection campaign on Monday has worried residents of a compound in the Zhongguancun area that have become attached to a technically illegal member of their community - a medium-sized female dog. Local regulations stipulate that a dog of that size cannot be raised in Zhongguancun, as residents are restricted to raising small dogs.

In 2001, the residents basically adopted the stray dog, quickly given the name Da Huang, just as the older buildings in the area were being razed to make room for new structures. It was assumed that the dog was abandoned by its former owner.

In the community, the dog made a bed of an old sofa and ate from rubbish bins. As time passed, some residents grew fond of the dog and started to feed her. Last spring, Da Huang found a smaller canine roommate, who has since also been adopted by the community and dubbed Xiao Huang.

Over the past couple of years, the dog population in the community has increased and owners have felt wary about Da Huang because of her larger size and presumed lack of rabies inoculation. One resident even called the police one night to take the dog away, but the effort was thwarted when Da Huang and Xiao Huang hid in a nearby woods.

Before October, one more sympathetic resident sent the two dogs to a relatives' home in Fangshan District where larger dogs are allowed. Shortly after, however, Da Huang ran away.

On the morning of November 24, 54 days after the move, Da Huang returned to the residential community at Zhongguancun in terrible condition, just skin and bones, her yellow fur dirty and blackened, and with one bleeding paw.

Her human friends tried to persuade the local police to make an exception and allow them to get dog raising licenses for Da Huang and Xiao Huang, but the police had no choice but refuse.

Da Huang's adopted family are hoping to find fellow dog lovers in a suburban area where the mutts could live in peace and safety.



Inflated cartoonish condoms greeted visitors young and old at Wangfujing on Monday.  
Photo by Huang Lian

## AIDS Campaign Takes to the Street

By Ji Runjun

On Monday, World AIDS Day, major activities were held on Wangfujing Street and at a local university to spread the word of AIDS prevention.

At the Wangfujing event, actors and AIDS activists Pu Cunxin and Jiang Wenli gave speeches from a podium festively decorated with thousands of condoms. Condom mascots also drew a lot of attention, even from pre-pubescent visitors.

The fun activity organized at Tsinghua University that day may serve as a model for similar events to be held at schools around the country.

## Alert Guards Avert Rail Disaster

By Yu Shanshan

Had it not been for the quick reactions of three railway patrolmen, a farmer surnamed Wang on his way to Beijing from Shandong Province to sell vegetables, would have been crushed by a hurtling train last Wednesday morning, according to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* the next day.

That fateful morning, Wang's tractor ran out of gas and he had to ask a friend to tow it behind his car. As the two slow vehicles reached a junction 10 kilometers away from Fengshuang station in Fengtai District, the train crossing signal rang. Hoping to save some time, the two men tried to get across the rails before the train came through, but the steel wire connecting their vehicles suddenly snapped, leaving Wang's tractor stranded on the tracks. Wang tried to push it the rest of the way, but the vehicle would not budge.

With the heavily loaded train just 1.3 kilometers away, three gatemen, Wu Yuzhu, Cai Lianwang and Zhang Jianming, saw the potential disaster scene. Wu raced towards the train, waving a red flag to signal it to stop. Cai pushed the button for the emergency warning device, which can sound an alarm to trains in danger at distances up to five kilometers and manually switched the traffic light at the junction from green to red, as Zhang quickly set up a stop sign at the intersection.

After receiving the warnings, the conductor hit the emergency brakes, and the train ended up grinding to a full stop just 150 meters from Wang and his dead tractor. The whole incident took place in less than two minutes. Within another 14 minutes, the tractor was moved off the tracks, the train resumed its course and traffic returned to normal.

Wang was very lucky, as the incident occurred just before the three gatemen

were set to leave work and head for home. Three similar events took place in October, according to Bai Lin, supervisor of the junction patrol station.

According to statistics from the Beijing branch of the national railway bureau, there are 481 rail junctions in Beijing, more than 300 of which are located within the area of the Fourth Ring Road. Nearly 225 of those stations are not guarded or otherwise supervised.

National regulations stipulate that there should be only one junction for every two kilometers of railway, but the number in Beijing clearly surpasses that standard. On the Jingcheng line, which goes from Beijing to Chengde, Hebei province, there is a junction nearly every kilometer on the section between the Beijing station and Miyun station. The local railway bureau has started to try to solve the dangerous situation by building new overpasses and bypass roads.

## Photo Expo Shows Lots of Skin

By Zhao Hongyi

Thanks to the sponsorship of the Australian Embassy, Rawmoves, a ten-day exhibition of the works of Australian photographer James Houston, opened at the Jintai Art Museum in Chaoyang Park on November 28.

The 40 black-and-white photos on show reveal Houston's focus on the human body and were taken during performances by the Sydney Dance Company, Australian Ballet, and Bangarra Dance Theatre, a troupe of young dancers that focus on the lives of Australia's aboriginal people. The select works come from over 600 rolls of film Houston shot in just five days.

"Watching people express themselves through forms and movements is an inspiration to me and my work," Houston said at the opening ceremony of the show. He has earned a reputation for his photographs of

nudes, one of which became the first nude to grace the cover of the Australian edition of *Vogue* magazine in October 1997.

Beijing is the last stop in the exhibition's tour, which has already taken the shots to Taiwan, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shanghai.



Rawmoves, a show of works by James Houston, runs until Monday.

## Customs to Destroy Originals of Imported Movies

By Wang Xiaoxiao

In order to prevent pirating, Beijing Customs is planning to destroy 468 film copies of 46 major foreign movies imported by the China Zhongying Corporation. Among the titles slated to burn are such already-screened hits as *Jurassic Park 2*.

Since *The Fugitive* became the first foreign blockbuster imported into China and screened at legitimate movie theaters in 1994, 150 foreign films have

been officially brought to China. Regulations set by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television stipulate that Zhongying is responsible for managing all foreign movies, declaring them to customs and paying any necessary taxes.

Zhongying and major foreign movie studios sign contracts on a movie-by-movie basis to destroy the original film copies of movies imported to China after their time on the big screen is over.

## Baby Traders Face Execution

By Dong Nan

Last Sunday, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Yulin Intermediate People's Court issued its judgment in the trial of China's largest-ever case of baby trading (see "Babies for Sale" in the October 24 issue of *Beijing Today*).

The two main defendants, Xie Deming and Cui Wenxian, were given the death penalty, while four other defendants were sentenced to death with two-year probation and five got sentences of life imprisonment. The remaining 40 defendants were hit with prison terms of 18 months to 15 years, with one exonerated from punishment.

Since the gang was uncovered this March, police have discovered the criminals were responsible for the sale of 147 infant children from Guangxi to Anhui and Hunan over a two-year period.

Guangxi native Xie Deming, 57, involved six family members in the syndicate. They sold the babies for 1,200 yuan each to a second group of traders, including Cui Wenxian, Zhao Hongliang, Ge Fashen and Cai Liping, who transported the children over province lines and sold them to local baby traders.

Cui doped the babies with sleeping pills to keep them from making noise during the covert transfers, causing the death of one infant.

## Snakehead Gets Death for Drownings

By Wang Xiaoxiao

The Miaoli Local Court of Taiwan sentenced Wang Chung-hsing, the main suspect in the drowning of six mainland women to death, on November 25.

Wang's accomplice, Ko Ching-song, received a lesser sentence of life imprisonment after informing on Wang, while two other men involved, Yeh Tien-sheng and Tseng Chung-ming, received three years and two years in jail.

*Beijing Today* reported on the tragic drownings on September 5. On August 26, the six Chinese women died after they were pushed overboard from the smugglers' boat on the way to Taiwan.

Fearing they would be stopped and arrested by Taiwanese coast guards, the four smugglers, members of what is popularly known as a "snakehead" gang, pushed a total of 26 women on their boat overboard near Tungshiao on the island's west coast. Six died and 20 survived, though two of those suffered serious injuries. According to reports in the Taiwan press, the women who hailed from Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hubei, Sichuan and Jilin provinces, were all between 21 and 28 years old, and were lured into the illegal deal by promises of high-paying jobs in Taiwan.



# China's New Elite

By Dong Nan

Different behavior, aspirations and consumption patterns can be seen among China's elite living in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, according to a survey published by the *Far Eastern Economic Review* earlier this month.

"The survey finds that although China's elite living in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou earn roughly the same income, their behavior and lifestyle can be very different," according to the writer of the report, Nury Vittachi.

The survey, called *China's Elite*, also revealed insights into consumerism in China and about the battle of the sexes.

This is the sixth time *Far Eastern Economic Review* has conducted its annual *China's Elite* survey. It aims to be a comprehensive study of lifestyles, habits and aspirations of executives in China. Nearly 1,100 face-to-face interviews were conducted between August and September in the three cities.

The 2003 study was conducted by independent research firm Synovate and was sponsored by Amercian Express.

**Differences between three cities**

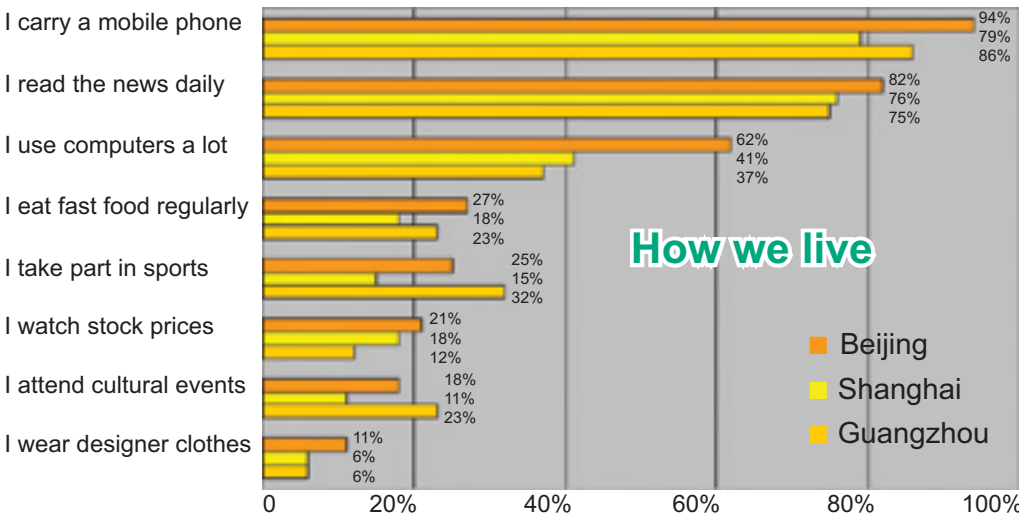
The probe shows that the Beijing business elite is the most high-tech savvy, with an insatiable appetite for news and information. Shanghai people have the most international mindset, while in Guangzhou, executives are most interested in playing sports and going to concerts and shows.

"Beijing is the home of Tech man," said the report. 73% of Beijing people confidently said, "I am used to Internet surfing." In Shanghai, the percentage was 64%, while in Guangzhou, just over half (57%) claimed to be web literate. More than 60% of Beijing executives use the computer "a lot". In Shanghai and Guangzhou, the numbers are around 40%.

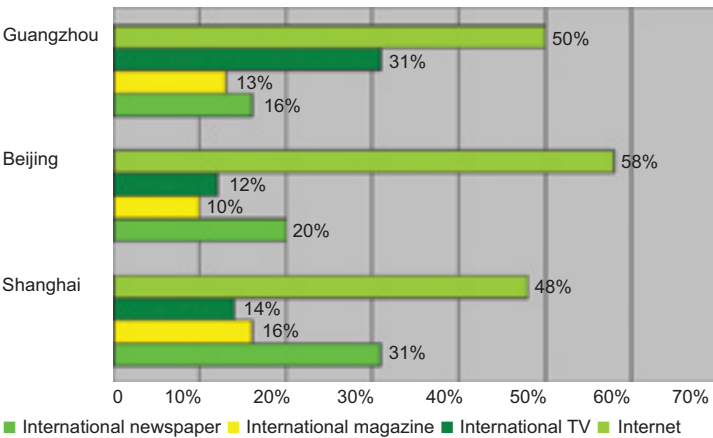
When asked about their international sources for business news, almost 60% of Beijing executives chose "the Internet", while in Shanghai and Guangzhou, less than one half went online for their business news.

More than 80% of Beijing people read newspapers daily, again a larger number than that of Shanghai and Guangzhou. The number of people professing to be interested in stock prices was also largest in Beijing (21%).

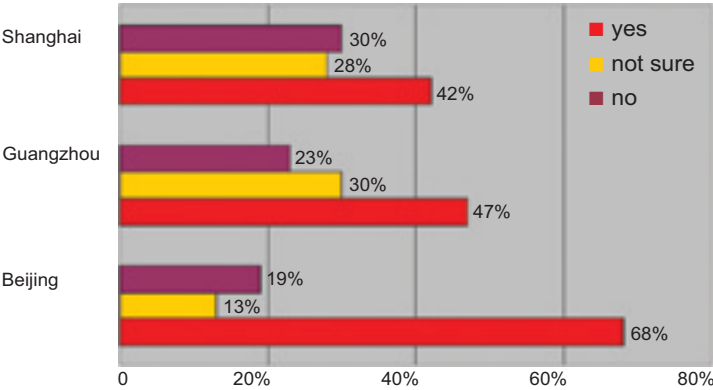
It seems that Beijing executives also prefer to get information from mobile phones. Among them, 94% carry a mobile phone,



## My international sources for business news



## I would sacrifice family time for work



## Benefits from my job

	Beijing	Shanghai	Guangzhou
performance bonus	31%	38%	32%
training courses	21%	32%	32%
company car	36%	37%	19%
profit share	20%	23%	18%
health insurance	78%	86%	66%
retirement plan	68%	81%	64%
paid holidays	59%	42%	53%
annual pay rise	55%	35%	33%

followed by 86% in Guangzhou and 79% in Shanghai.

The survey shows that Shanghai people are the least likely to use mobile phones or participate in out-of-door activities. 79% of Shanghai people have mobile phones, the lowest number in the three cities. And the number of Shanghai people who like to take part in sports or attend cultural events was the lowest of the three cities as well.

But this does not necessarily mean that Shanghai people are philistines or merely stay-at-home types. Instead, they enjoy relaxing at home and pay more attention to quality of life. Less than 20% of Shanghai people eat fast food regularly, the least in the three cities. And more than 70% of Beijing and Guangzhou people complained, "I am too busy, I need to relax," while only 60% of Shanghai people said the same.

Shanghai people also appear to have the most international mindset. When asked about their sources for business news, the number of Shanghai people who chose "international newspapers" and "international magazines" was the largest in the three cities.

Compared with their Beijing and Shanghai counterparts, Guangzhou executives are more "active". The percentage of them who are willing to engage in sports or culture events was the largest in the three cities. And they are more likely to fly first class.

Though only 57% of Guangzhou people say they are competent at Internet surfing, and less Guangzhou people use the Internet to gather business news or read foreign newspapers and magazines, they have more chances to watch international TV channels. More than 30% of Guangzhou people say they get business news

## I drive a...

	Average	Beijing	Shanghai	Guangzhou
Volkswagen	17%	28%	17%	6%
Audi	4%	6%	3%	2%
Honda	4%	4%	3%	5%
Buick GM	3%	3%	6%	1%
Toyota	3%	2%	1%	5%
Nissan	2%	4%	1%	1%
BMW	1%	1%	1%	1%
Hyundai	1%	1%	1%	1%

## Drinks I consumed recently

	Beijing	Shanghai	Guangzhou
Suntory	0	42%	0
Remy Marting	9%	9%	21%
Hennessy	6%	10%	17%
Martell	7%	4%	19%
Chivas Regal	3%	5%	1%
Veuve Cliquot	0	8%	0

from "international TV", while in Beijing and Shanghai, the numbers are around 10%.

## An internationalized consumerism

Three out of five people say they prefer to choose products with familiar bands. But the rule is not uniform between the sexes. Men are particularly likely to make their decisions by brand instead of price, while women are more likely to make their final decision based on pricing.

According to the survey, among people under 35 years old, 74 percent thought that international appearance was a key factor in their shopping decisions. When buying clothes, British label Alfred Dunhill is the most popular fashion name in the cities, followed by France's Cartier, Italy's Gianni Versace and the French Louis Vuitton.

When it comes to ownership of high-priced watches (more than \$500), three brands stand out: Longines, Omega and Seiko. But while these are the brands most purchased, respondents say that the most prestigious watch brand is Rolex.

Japanese brand Suntory was the single most consumed up-market drink in Shanghai in the four weeks prior to the survey being taken, and French cognac brands Remy Martin, Hennessy and Martell can take comfort from being consumed widely.

As for cars, Volkswagen enjoys easily the highest popularity, followed by Audi, Honda, GM and Toyota. Nissan, BMW and Hyundai were mentioned as well.

The most well-known and used international tech brands are Intel, Hewlett-Packard and Dell. Besides computers, the survey shows that executives own many other high-tech products which are pop-

ular around the world, such as handheld computers, MP3 music players, video game consoles, DVD players and SMS services.

"China's consumers are discerning and are revealing a preference for international brands," commented Jia Lijun, vice president and country manager of American Express in China.

## Career and income

There is a 12% difference between the salaries of men and their female counterparts, with respective monthly salaries of 6,036 yuan and 5,377 yuan — equivalent to \$730 and \$650. And the difference is increasing. Men reported that their salaries climbed an average of 1.82% over the past year, while women said theirs had gone up just 1.04%. In general, the salaries of older people fell in the 12 months prior to the survey, while those of younger people climbed.

The survey shows that to Beijing men, work is a far higher priority than family. To Shanghai and Guangzhou people, the choice is a little tougher. Female respondents were far more likely to choose the family option than their male counterparts.

What are these individuals looking for? It isn't just money. Social status, most respondents agreed, was more important than wealth. And the majority of respondents said they would definitely prefer to spend their cash on "green," or environmentally friendly, versions of products rather than ordinary ones.

When asked about "benefits from my job", many different answers were given, including performance bonuses, training courses, company cars, health insurance, retirement plans, paid holidays and annual pay rises.

(Source: *Far Eastern Economic Review*)

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# HIV Thieves Detained

By Sun Ming

A gang of thirteen HIV-positive thieves were detained last Monday in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province. It is the first time so many HIV-carrying suspects have been detained at the same time.

In China, criminal suspects who are found to be HIV-positive are usually swiftly released because police are afraid of their disease spreading. It's a growing problem because, not surprisingly, many of these people become regular offenders.

But the authorities around China are now realizing they have to deal with the issue. On October 28, Liu Gang (pseudonym), an HIV-positive suspect in another case was moved to a detention center in Wuhan, Hubei Province with a separate cell which was described as the first in China to be specially prepared for HIV-positive suspects. Beijing Today reported the event on November 21.

## 13 HIV-carriers arrested

On November 15, two patrol policemen captured three thieves in a supermarket in Hangzhou. All of them claimed that they were HIV carriers and two were later confirmed to be carrying the virus.

The three suspects confessed they belonged to a large burglary ring, most of whose members had caught HIV through drug injection.

On November 17, policemen from Xihu Police Station caught another 23 members of the ring in an apartment in the suburbs of Hangzhou. The 26 members of the ring were all from Luzhai county in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

"They all shouted 'I have AIDS!' when we rounded them up," Wang Qinkun, the deputy director of the police station, told *News Morning Post*, a local newspaper in Hangzhou on November 21.

After medical tests, including the two suspects arrested on November 15, 13 members of the ring in total were found to be HIV-positive, according to Hangzhou Police.

These suspects were sent to the Compulsory Drug Quitting Center of Hangzhou Public Security Bureau on November 17. This time, they weren't simply set free. After seven days' therapy, they were moved into detention last Monday.

## Careful preparation

"We'd prepared special detention cells for them before they were arrested," Ni Hongfeng, the director of Xihu Detention Center, told *Xinmin Weekend* on Saturday.

Xihu Detention Center prepared several special cells and purchased daily necessities for these rare inmates. Police officers working on the case were also provided with protective equipment including helmets, masks and gloves.

"It's time for us to take measures to deal with HIV-positive criminals. This burglary ring has carried out crimes in the city since 1999 and was involved in at least 600 cases," said Ni.

According to Hangzhou Police, in the past six years, over 100 HIV-carrying thieves have been arrested in the city. Most were youths, the youngest being only 12 years old.

"Each time, we had to let them go because they were HIV carriers," said Wang Qinkun, deputy director of Xihu Police Station. "This seemed to increase their boldness. Sometimes they were sent to a compulsory drug quitting center. However, after they were released, they began taking drugs and stealing again."

Wang explained that police were worried it would be hard to prevent the virus from infecting others in detention or in prison.

According to China's administrative detention regulations, criminal suspects must receive a health check-up before being detained. Criminal suspects suffering acute infectious disease are not detained. They should re-

**"Each time, we had to let them go because they were HIV carriers. This seemed to increase their boldness. Sometimes they were sent to a compulsory drug quitting center. However, after they were released, they began taking drugs and stealing again."**

— Wang Qinkun, deputy director of Xihu Police Station.

ceive medical care first.

"Actually, AIDS is not an acute infectious disease. We need to take special measures to deal with these suspects," said Wang.

Early in March this year, Hangzhou police seized 10 burglars. Most of them came from Guangxi. Among the 10, five were HIV carriers. The police had to release the five after discovering their condition, *Xinhua News* reported last Tuesday.

## Getting away with it

A reporter from *News Morning Post* was permitted to interview some suspects of the burglary ring at the Drug Quitting Center of Hangzhou Public Security Bureau on November 20, three days after the men were arrested.

"I don't think they'll keep me here long," suspect Chen Shujie (pseudonym) told the newspaper. Chen, 20, came to Hangzhou in 1999 in order to get money to take drugs. He has been a drug user since the age of 13.

"I can't count the number of times that I was captured. I found out about my illness in 2000 after I had been arrested, but I was soon released," said Chen.

Chen said that he once wept at night after discovering his illness. But gradually, he became more philosophical. "I've been a drug taker for so long, so I've already destroyed my own life. And the HIV virus can scare off police and other people. Many other sufferers are doing the same thing," said Chen.

Chen soon became an expert pickpocket. It was an easy way to make money. Usually he could get 600 yuan in one day, enough to feed his heroin habit.

"He stole whenever he needed money. Chen didn't even try escaping when he saw the police coming. He knew that he would soon be released," said *News Morning Post* on November 21.

Chen said that his addiction was not as serious as some of his partners in crime. Some of them needed to take drugs costing around 500 yuan per day.

Qin Damei, another member of the gang, told the newspaper he had heard of some people deliberately contracting AIDS in order to scare off the police.

"Qin said some drug takers used a syringe to extract blood from one HIV carrier in the gang and inject it into their own body. Some of them were not disturbed by contracting AIDS. Instead they believed that the only way to treat AIDS was to take drugs. Every night they went out to steal and then brought drugs. As many shared syringes, the infection spread easily," said *News Morning Post* on November 21.

Wei Laoliu (pseudonym), 22, had already been sent to drug-quitting centers several times by police, but after around 10 days, he would be released and would then continue his stealing.

When asked about the future, Wei said that he had no future. "I have no money. Because I'm a

drug taker and an AIDS patient, I can't find a job. I can only wait until my death."

"Hangzhou is quite rich so that's why we came here," Ma Wei (pseudonym), another member of the gang told *News Morning Post*.

Influenced by a friend, Ma began to take drugs three years ago. He also contracted HIV through drug injection.

"After I caught AIDS, I wasn't afraid of being captured. And as a drug taker, I don't have that long left anyway," said Ma.

According to Hangzhou Police, they once found a letter from an HIV-positive thief. In it, he invited a fellow townsman to join him in Hangzhou. "People in Hangzhou are quite rich. And the police won't beat you or detain you if you are an HIV-carrier."

## Too expensive

"We lack experience in this form of special detention," said Ni Hongfeng, the director of Xihu Detention Center. Ni said that some of the 13 HIV-positive suspects had already shown the symptoms of developing full-blown AIDS. "We can only provide medicine for fever or stomachache."

The issue of how to deal with HIV-infected criminals has become a hot topic. Some cities, such as Wenzhou, are planning to set up special hospitals to both treat and detain these criminals.

"Money is a big problem," an official from Hangzhou Public Security Bureau who refused to publish his name told *Beijing Today* on Monday.

The official said that the medical expenditure for one HIV-positive patient is around 100,000 yuan per year, depending on how advanced the condition. "Once they are sentenced, detaining them in prison is also a problem," said the official.



One of the HIV-positive suspects

Photo by Shi Xunfeng

# Ice Lords on Trial

By Sun Ming

The trial of ten defendants in China's biggest ever drug case involving "ice" opened at Guangzhou Intermediate People's Court in Guangdong Province last Thursday.

The defendants are charged with illegally producing and trafficking more than 12.36 tons of the pure methamphetamine, known popularly as ice, between January and October of 1999.

According to Guangzhou Police, the drugs seized had been produced by chemical synthesis over a period of 10 months. The ice police found was nearly equal in quantity to the total amount of ice seized worldwide in 1998.

## Huge haul found by accident

Zhang Qisheng, 44, is the alleged boss of the massive ice production and smuggling network. He was traced by police during the investigation into another drug lord, Tan Xiaolin, whose smuggling racket was cracked by police in 1999.

On November 4, a car carrying 119 kilograms of heroin arrived at a warehouse in the suburbs of Guangzhou. Armed police arrested four men on the

spot. Luo Jianguang and Wang Luyu were the drivers of the car and Zhuang Shuncheng and Tang Wen were about to take possession of the heroin.

The four men admitted that they were members of the Tan Xiaolin group. They had transported the heroin from Ruili City in western Yunnan Province, which is bordered by Burma, to Guangzhou for sale. They intended to store the heroin in the warehouse.

A surprise was awaiting the police when they searched the warehouse. They found 11.08 tons of ice. The four drug smugglers denied that the ice had anything to do with them or their boss Tan Xiaolin. Police seized another 1.28 tons of ice in Puning, a city in eastern Guangdong Province, 14 days later. In total, they had found 12.36 tons of ice.

## Ice factory

Guangzhou Police soon discovered that the ice belonged to Zhang Qisheng who had smuggled heroin with Tan Xiaolin for several years. The ice was produced by Zhang Qisheng's gang in an agricultural chemi-

cal factory in Yinchuan City, in northwestern Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

Produced between January and October 1999 in Yinchuan, the ice was transported to Guangzhou for sale.

According to the public prosecutor, when police arrived at the site where the agricultural chemical factory was located, the facilities used for manufacturing the ice had already been transported to Shanghai and Fujian. The gang planned to establish factories to manufacture ice in the two cities.

## Zhang extradited to China

On November 10 1999, Zhang Qisheng fled to Thailand from Kunming using a counterfeit Chinese passport under the name Zhang Zhongheng. Other members of the gang fled to various parts of China, according to Guangzhou Police.

Guangdong Provincial Bureau of Public Security immediately established a task force on November 19 to handle the case and sought both international and domestic cooperation to help in tracking down the suspects.

Zhang was later picked up by Thai police in October, 2000. Because Zhang hadn't committed a crime in Thailand, he was sentenced to one year and a half in jail in Thailand for using a fake passport to enter the country. With the help of Interpol China, Zhang was extradited to China on June 27 2002, after completing his jail term in Thailand.

By January this year, nine other suspects had been arrested in China. But one remaining leader of the gang, Chen Bingxi, is still at large. Guangzhou Procuratorate instituted prosecution against the suspects on charges of manufacturing and trafficking drugs on August 22 this year.

## Family affair

All ten members of the drug gang are from Puning City, Guangdong Province and some of them are relatives. Zhang Shaoxian, 38, is the wife of Zhang Qisheng, the head of the gang. She was accused of harboring illegal money for her husband. Zhang Qibin, 35, Zhang Qisheng's younger brother, was accused of illegally trafficking ice.

Brothers Ji Wenlong, Ji Wencheng and Ji Wensheng are accused of illegally manufacturing and trafficking drugs.

"The trial last Thursday attracted nearly one hundred people. 44-year-old Zhang Qisheng looked quite calm. He denied all the accusations, saying his confession had been extracted under torture by the police," reported *Southern Daily*, a local newspaper in Guangzhou.

The other defendants also denied the accusations.

Zhang Shaoxian is the only one female defendant in the case. She cried in court and claimed that she'd never harbored illegal money for her husband. When asked to account for the ten million yuan she transferred to Thailand through illegal underground banking, she answered that the money had been earned by her husband legally.

According to the public prosecutor, while Zhang Qisheng was at large in Thailand, he called his wife in Guangzhou and asked her to transfer the money to Thailand. The public prosecutors believe that Zhang earned the money through manufacturing and trafficking ice. However, Zhang Qisheng and his wife insisted that they earned the money by speculating on the stock market.

The case is still under investigation.



Burning the ice

Photo by Photocom





## Approaching Athens

The last in a series of seven special reports on the 2004 Olympics

**'We think the rental market has great potential, but we must make it clear to our fellow citizens that it is impossible to strike oil by renting their houses during the Olympics. Only when the landowners and tenants reach an agreement on the rent, can this plan be meaningful.'**

— Spyros Kapralos, one of the executive members of ATHOC

# Where to Stay in Athens?

By Geng Zhensong / Jiang Hao  
As the Vice Minister of Information and Mass Media of Greece, Telemachos Chytiris, pointed out to us, "Greece is the smallest host country in modern Olympic history while China will be the largest." But this doesn't mean Greece is making any less effort.

Local landmarks like the Acropolis signify the long history of the city. The crowded streets and the dense buildings also have a totally different atmosphere to most host cities we have visited. Indeed Greek history has hindered efforts to prepare for the games as organizers have to tread carefully around the numerous relics and ancient sites around the country, and the capital in particular. But this is not a frustration for Greek people. They tell us that visitors to Athens during the games will have a unique Olympic experience here.

### Luxurious liners to be turned into hotels

Greece is a small country with a total population of just under 11 million. During the Olympic Games, Athens and its surrounding area will receive two million foreign guests. Finding accommodation for all these people has required some creative thinking.

Organizers of the Sydney Olympics successfully arranged for visitors to live in the pleasure boats in the port. The Athens Organizing Committee (ATHOC) will follow suit, but on a larger scale.

Piraeus is located in the suburbs of Athens. 15 large pleasure ships anchored there will provide over 3,000 rooms for the Olympics. The tenants will include sponsors, members of international sports organizations and tourists willing to spend big bucks.

At the end of last year, Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki, chairman of ATHOC, signed a contract with Cunard Line Shipping Company. According to the contract, ATHOC will rent the famous liner, the Queen Mary II,



Inside the Old Mariner

Photos by Cheng Tieliang

from the company and use it as an exclusive hotel on the sea.

The Queen Mary II is 345 metres long, 80 meters high, weighs 150,000 tons and cost \$800 million to build. It has 10 restaurants, 14 bars, and indoor and outdoor swimming pools and gymnasiums for those who want to get properly into the spirit of things. Boasting 1,137 guest-rooms and 173 suites, the liner can accommodate 3,000 guests.

We visited another liner named "Old Mariner" which will also provide accommodation during the Olympics. While mooring off Athens so visitors can get to Olympic events easily, the luxury liners will also offer brief trips to local tourist attractions.

### Private houses to let

Although at present it's hard to work out how many tourists who will come to watch the games, ATHOC estimates that the daily demand for hotel beds will be 100,000 to 150,000 during the Olympics.

While luxury liners will provide extra accommodation for the champagne set, ATHOC also hopes to make 10,000 private houses in Athens available for foreign guests to rent during the Olympics.

This plan is named the "Family Involvement Project". ATHOC hopes that Greek citizens who own properties can provide renting services. Many people have already said they

wish to participate in this project and earn some extra money.

However, Spyros Kapralos, one of the executive members of ATHOC, appealed to citizens saying they should not plan to take advantage of the Olympics to reap a big profit. "This plan is on behalf of tourists from around the world. We think the rental market has great potential, but we must make it clear to our fellow citizens that it is impossible to strike oil by renting their houses during the Olympics. Only when the landowners and tenants reach an agreement on the rent, can this plan be meaningful."

Two companies have been authorized to execute this plan of providing house-renting services to foreign guests, "Alpha Hospitality Company 2004" and "Greek Hospitality Company". Representatives from the two companies announced at a press conference organized by ATHOC that the plan will begin early next year. The rental period will be from July 10 to September 10, 2004 and guests will be able to rent houses for anything from three days up to two months.

### Olympic chow

ATHOC estimates that 12 million meals will be provided to athletes, coaches, workers technicians, reporters, sponsors and spectators during the games. The Food Service Department within ATHOC aims to guarantee high quality food and service. Special food for ethnic groups will be provided as well as traditional Greek cuisine.

In the Olympic Village, food will be provided to 22,000 people 24 hours a day. At least 50,000 meals according to 1,500 recipes from different countries will be provided every day. 100 tons of food will be consumed daily and 55 tons of garbage

will produced.

The Food Service Department will select experienced high-quality food service companies through international tendering to provide the Olympics with the best food and service. These companies will be supervised by the Food Service Department. In addition, ATHOC will work closely with security departments and Greek government agencies in charge of food security.

### Lower ticket price

Tickets for the 2004 Olympics began to be sold to the public last May. Given the initial response, ATHOC officials are urging people who wish to attend to buy as early as possible.

A total of 3 million tickets will be sold, with an average price of 35 euros, 18 euros cheaper than tickets at the 2000 Sydney Games. It's a statistic in keeping with ATHOC's pledge to keep commercialism to a minimum at the Athens games. But for those ready to splurge, a set of tickets called "Olympic Experience" will be available for a mighty 71,000 euros and will enable spectators to attend all the events at the games.

It is estimated the most popular tickets will be those for the swimming and track and field events. The price of these tickets range from 40 to 90 euros. The original price for tickets to the opening ceremony was 100 euros, but it skyrocketed to 950 euros after the first day of public sales. The ATHOC officials revealed that although the Main Stadium where the Opening Ceremony of the 2004 Olympics will be held can only accommodate 70,000 people, they have received

280,000 applications for tickets.

### Huge investment to improve city environment

After being elected mayor of Athens in October, 2002, Dora Bakoyannis announced a new construction plan for the city on February 10, 2003. According to the blueprint, 95 million euros will be invested for necessary construction projects, such as renovating old buildings, planting trees and flowers, recovering and recycling waste material and building temporary shelters for homeless people.

The blueprint aimed for about 5,000 buildings to be redecorated and for 10,000 trees to be planted. Plans for waste material treatment will also be expensive, at more than 35.8 million euros.

The Greek Government is doing their best for the coming Olympics. Although in this process they have been subjected to many criticisms, their enthusiasm and conscientiousness during our interviews have conveyed a strong sense that the 2004 games in the birthplace of the Olympics are bound to succeed.

## Olympic Village: A Beautiful Scene

By Chen Dechang / Jiang Hao

We started out in a small Bens bus from the center of Athens, passed through the crowded streets and after driving north on an expressway we reached the Olympic village at the foot of the Parnitha Mountain.

The spokesman for the Information Division of the 2004 Olympic Village Company Ltd. introduced the Olympic Village to us. It consists of three parts, accommodation, green areas and pubic facilities. The accommodation part includes 366 apartment buildings of two to four storeys with 2,292 apartments. Public facilities include a recreation center, cultural center, religious activity center, dining area, news center for delegations, commercial center and other service facilities.

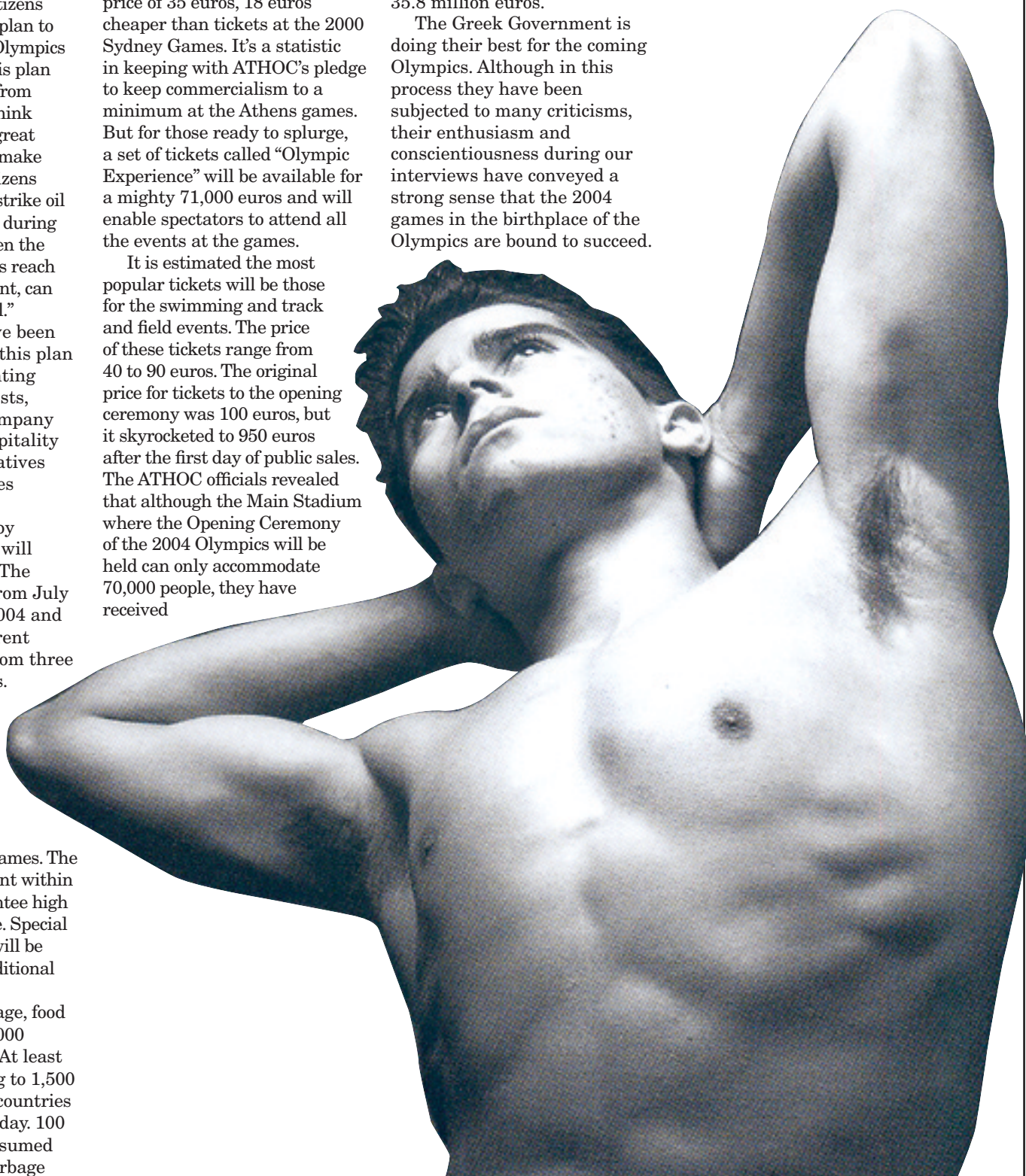
With a total construction area of 1.24 million square meters and a total investment of US\$316 million, the Olympic Village will be completed by February, 2004. Meanwhile, a wide new expressway will connect the village with the Olympic Sports Center (the main venue for the 2004 Olympics) in the north suburbs of Athens. The 10-kilometer journey will take about 20 minutes.

This beautiful Olympic Village will receive 17,5000 athletes attending the summer Olympics and the 6,000 handicapped athletes for the following Special Olympics.

After the two games, the whole Olympic Village will be taken over by the Greek Housing Organization for Workers. These apartments will be distributed to low-income families according to the national housing scheme rather than being sold on the market at a much higher price.

We were told that construction of the village has been conducted according to the highest European standards. We saw technicians testing the quality of materials, even the cement. They told us that only after stringent tests prove the quality is up to scratch can the cement be put into use.

The Old Mariner





# A Different Path to Dunhuang



Restoration at Qutan Temple

By Shan Jinliang

Zhang Yongjun, 41, is probably best known for the unique "colored cotton" textile he used to produce. But this restless jack-of-all-trades is now more interested in his current project - reviving the ancient local culture in Dunhuang. "I do not want to be known merely as the inventor of Chinese colored cotton," he says. Zhang is now the chairman of Beijing Great Dunhuang Culture Corporation, an organization that develops and promotes Dunhuang cultural products.

Zhang organized China's first exhibition of replicas of ancient Dunhuang musical instruments in Beijing from November 16 to 23, also holding a concert with the instruments in Majestic Garden, Haidian District.

Some people consider Zhang to be a bit of an oddity as he has never stuck to one career. He gave up the opportunity to work in Beijing after graduating from Lanzhou University. As a physics major he had plenty of opportunities, but he decided to stay in Lanzhou and work for a local environment office. He later developed his own textile company and though he could have made a lot of money had he stuck with it, Zhang decided to move on to the area of Dunhuang culture.

But Zhang's wife, Ba Duofang, is not at all surprised by her husband's meandering professional life. Ba comes from a rich family in Lanzhou and had to fight off a number of eager suitors while she was working as a local civil servant. But Zhang had something special about him, Ba told *Beijing Today*. "He had a peculiar kind of arrogance that set him apart," she says.

## Tough childhood

Zhang was born in a small village near Weifang city, Shandong Province in 1962. After his father was imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution, Zhang soon found himself doing small jobs to help the family make some money. He also had to carry his younger brother (who was suffering from encephalitis) to school.

Unfortunately, Zhang was not so good at his studies at senior middle school. The low point was when he scored three percent in a mathematics test. But the ensuing insults from his classmates persuaded him to study harder and he eventually made it into



Banging the drum for Dunhuang culture.

Photos by Wang Wei



Round pipa, a traditional Chinese musical instrument made from Dunhuang frescoes.



Zhang's 24hr monitoring system

Photos by Zhang Yongjun

the top 10 students in his local county. This enabled him to enter the Physics Department of Lanzhou University in Gansu Province in 1980.

Gansu is known as a tough place to live, blighted by desertification, sandy winds and a water shortage. But while Zhang's friends headed for Beijing after graduating in 1984, he decided to stay. "I was confident I would be able to find a good job there," he says. He soon started working for a temporary local environmental administration, helping to publicize what they were doing.

"Trees were being planted every year in Lanzhou, but no-one knew about it," Zhang says. "I selected a place to film a video, explaining what we were doing. The two short video stories we did were later awarded a prize by China Central Television," Zhang says.

Three years later, Zhang decided it was time for something new. He felt like doing research and using his background in physics. In July 1987, Zhang learned that the Dunhuang Cultural Academy was looking for college students who had studied physics and chemistry to help preserve cultural relics. Zhang's qualifications and his experience in environmental protection got him a job with the academy's Conservation Institute.

When he started, Zhang had almost no knowledge about Dunhuang, but he became fascinated by the frescos in the Mogao Caves. Dunhuang lies on the ancient Silk Road to the west of Xian, and was the center of a rich culture as well as movement of goods. The Mogao caves form probably the most celebrated repository of Buddhist art in the world. Efforts to preserve the caves gained new impetus after Mogao was officially

listed as a World Cultural Heritage site by UNESCO in December 1987.

Before Zhang's arrival, most of the preservation work consisted of rudimentary physical repairs, and the research approach was quite limited. In cooperation with US and Japanese researchers, Zhang helped develop a system for monitoring changes in the caves' conditions over 24 hours.

Zhang later played a part in the International Conference on the Conservation of Ancient Sites on the Silk Road in 1993. "The Getty Conservation Institute in the US and the Japanese National Cultural Properties Research Institute attended the event, and *The Times* and *New York Times* reported on it," he says with pride.

## From research to business

After the Silk Road event, the Japanese National Cultural Properties Research Institute offered to sponsor Zhang in studying for a master's degree on cultural relics conservation, but he decided it was time to take a different path. Deng Xiaoping had recently been calling for civil servants to consider quitting and moving into commerce, and Zhang heeded the advice.

Zhang had read an essay by his daughter Zhang Mengxi, in which she said how nice it would be if scientists could make clothes for people to wear with colors as pretty as the flowers in the park. Zhang put his mind to it and invited scholars from a few cotton research institutes in Gansu and Sichuan to help him with his project. In 1995, he successfully started producing colored

cotton, and he displayed clothes made from his special material at the China International Clothing and Accessories Fair in October 1997.

From early 1995 to late 1999, he worked as general manager for several cotton companies in Henan, Sichuan, Gansu, Xinjiang and Beijing, but he spent most of his time in Beijing. The market for colored cotton was growing fast, but Zhang was becoming restless again so he decided to study management at Tsinghua University for half a year in early 2000. "If a man is bound up by making money, he will lose the joy of life," he says.

## A new calling

Zhang's former boss at the Dunhuang Cultural Academy, Fan Jinshi, called him and invited him to come and help promote Dunhuang culture in September 2000, but at first Zhang was not too enthusiastic.

After a few talks with Fan, however, Zhang accepted the post of chairman of Beijing Great Dunhuang Culture Corporation, in which the Dunhuang Cultural Academy was the major shareholder.

Early in 1992, the Dunhuang Musical Instruments Research Project was approved by the state, so local researchers set about reproducing 54 musical instruments which had been used more than 1,300 years before. Eleven years later, Dunhuang experts had produced 180 replicas of 44 kinds of ancient musical instruments.

Now, Zhang plans to organize a grand event combining Dunhuang music, fashion shows and dances. He hopes to hold a concert in Dunhuang next August. If it's a success, Zhang plans to take the show on the road around China and even overseas. It's all part of his Dunhuang Culture Revival Project, with one eye on the Olympic Games in 2008.

"I hope Dunhuang can be represented along with the rest of Chinese culture in 2008 when Beijing holds the Olympics," Zhang says. "Promoting the culture of Dunhuang is not just my job, it's a cause for the whole of society," he says.

The strain of Zhang's constant efforts is beginning to show. "My days are filled with Dunhuang. I even have to talk about business when having a drink with good friends," he says. And Zhang has little time for his other interests like traveling and swimming.

Part of the pressure he's under comes from lack of funds. The music concert next August will cost three to five million yuan, and Zhang will only be able to apply for support from the government if it's a success.

At least he can count on his wife for support and assistance. "He is not a good husband really," Ba says jokingly, while Zhang smiles. Their 16-year-old daughter Zhang Mengxi also believes in what her father is doing. "But he should drink less alcohol and stop smoking," she told *Beijing Today*.

One of the world-famous Mogao cave frescoes.





# Confucious Says ...

*The master and his followers said, or wrote, enough to fill 5,000 volumes. Two major universities are now vying for the right to publish these complete works for the first time.*

By Yu Shanshan

Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism constitute the essence of traditional Chinese culture. While both Taoists and Buddhists have long had their own "complete works," or *Ru Zang* (the Taoist Canon, or *Tao Zang*, and the *Zhong Hua Da Zang Jing*), followers of the teachings of Confucius have had to make do with a bewildering variety of collections of Confucian writings, none of them complete.

This situation is about to change, with both Beijing and Renmin universities preparing to compile and publish their own *Ru Zang*.

Back in the Qing Dynasty, Confucian scholar Zhou Yongnian started work on what was to have been the first *Ru Zang*, but the task proved too great for him.

In November 2002, Beijing University began to discuss the possibility of the project, and in early 2003 formed a work group

with Xu Zhihong, the university president, as director. Meanwhile, also in November 2002, Renmin University established its Institute of Confucian Studies, the first of its kind at any Chinese college or university. Within the first month of its establishment, preparation work for their *Ru Zang* was under way.

On August 4 this year, the Ministry of Education set "Confucius classics compilation and research" as one a bidding research project.

Before the bid meeting was held, Beijing University's Tang Yijie said, "According to our plan, no matter whether we win the bid or not, we will publish an essential works edition of around 500 volumes. If we win the bid, with national investment, we will publish the complete edition, totaling some 5,000 volumes."

Zhang Liwen, head of the Institute of Confucius Study of Renmin University said, "Even

if we can't get money from the ministry of education, we will get money to compile the work." So far, Renmin University has raised 1 million yuan in foreign investment. Song Zhiming, a member of the compilation group in Renmin University estimated that it will at least cost 800 million yuan to complete their project.

According to 76-year-old Tan Yijie, who presides over the routine work, Beijing University plans to spend ten years in compiling an essential works edition and another ten years on the complete edition.

At Renmin University, 68-year-old Zhang Liwen, who has been studying Confucianism for over 40 years, leads the compilation group. Their blueprint is divided into three parts: the major project (*Ru Zang* compilation, 500 volumes, some 500 million words), the basic project (Confucius study) and a supplementary project (an electronic database).

On November 6, scholars of Beijing University and Renmin University attended the bid meeting held by the Ministry of Education. The final vote was for Beijing University (among five panel members, four agreed to let Beijing University preside over the compilation of *Ru Zang*). But Zhang Liwen told *Beijing Today*, "This is still not the final decision. The ministry will consider other aspects and Renmin University will catch up."

"Although Beijing University has the strongest academic capability, the compilation project cannot be solely completed by one university or research group of one region," Tang admitted. So far, Tsinghua University, Wuhan University, Fudan University, Beijing Normal University and Sichuan University have also expressed interest taking part in the compilation work. Meanwhile Beijing University has begun to enroll graduate students specially focusing on the project.

## Stamp Book Marks 125th Anniversary of Big Dragon

By Zhang Huan

A specially prepared book of precious stamps, titled *Stamp Treasures of 100 Years*, has gone on sale for 38,000 yuan at Beijing Wangfujing Bookstore.

The volume has been specially made to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the "big dragon stamps", the first set of stamps ever issued in China.

The book contains 208 sets of copies of stamp treasures issued from the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) up till the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and includes the famous big dragon stamps, small dragon stamps and commemorative stamps for the birthday of empress dowager Ci Xi, the power behind the throne of the Qing Dynasty from 1861 to 1908. It took three years to complete the preparatory work for the book, because many of the rare stamps were so difficult to track down.

The big dragon stamps are actually three stamps with the same design but different face value and color. There is a golden dragon at the center with colorful clouds and water waves in the background. The face value of the three stamps respectively are 1

cent, 3 cents and 5 cents and the corresponding colors are green, red and orange.

Famous as the big dragon stamps are among philatelists, there are few accurate records about their production. For example, there is no record of who the designer was. Many collectors believe they were designed by a foreigner, because in the background of the design is a six-story pagoda, which contradicts Buddhist practice. Buddhist pagodas always have an odd number of stories, as any Chinese artist would have known. Others insist the designer must have been Chinese though, since the design bears such a strong

flavor of Chinese culture.

There is also no accurate record of where the stamps were printed. It is said that the Publishing House of Shanghai Customs had been entrusted with the responsibility of printing the stamps, but when the publishing house moved from the Shanghai Customs building in 1954, many historical records, making it impossible to verify this claim.

The only puzzle that has been settled is the date of issue of the stamps. Du Shengyu, a philatelic expert unearthed a record stating that the post office of Tianjin Customs received the first batch of big dragon stamps on July

24, 1878, after a two-year search of the Shanghai Customs archives. This discovery was also confirmed by Xu Jialin, from Tianjin. Xu said his father-in-law, who was working in the post office of Tianjin Customs at that time, witnessed the sale of the first batch of stamps on July 24, 1878 as soon as they arrived at the post office, and actually bought one for himself. The reason Xu's father-in-law remembered the date so clearly was that it happened to be his birthday.



Artist Zhang Yujuan shows a model of an ancient commercial street, one of the traditional handicrafts included at the workshop. Photo by Lu Beifeng

## Workshop Opened to Preserve Handicrafts

By Zhao Pu

China's largest research center for traditional handicrafts was established in Beijing last week. Called "Baigongfang," literally meaning the workshop of one hundred handicraftsmen, the research center employs 130 artists of Chinese traditional handicrafts from all over the country.

The center has also collected more than 17,000 valuable works by top artisans and contains 30 workshops for different arts, including cloisonné enamel, lacquer ware, jade carving,

embroidery, and snuff bottle inside painting.

The artists will work to develop their various arts and teach students. "Each artist will teach at least one student as the successor of their art and skills," said Zhang Xinchao, deputy manager of the center at last Wednesday's opening ceremony.

"We can not only develop our own art here, but also communicate with other artists and learn from each other," said cloisonné enamel artist Zhang Tonglu at the ceremony.

The research center is open

to the public, and aims to display and introduce traditional handicrafts. Exhibitions, displays production procedure and lectures will be held regularly during weekends.

"The traditional handicrafts industry faces a severe problem of succession. The places and personnel dedicated to domestic handicrafts are both declining in number. Some of the art and skills of making traditional handicrafts have already been lost. Baigongfang has been established to better promote and preserve traditional Chinese handicrafts," said Zhang.

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# Bridging the Social Gap

## UNESCO-sponsored show highlights life and times of migrant workers

By Yu Shanshan

In 1935, architect and poet Lin Huiyin wrote in her essay *Outside the Window*, "Fashionable scholars like to tour strange places as a matter of scientific exploration, but an invisible window always exists between them and the people they observe," referring to the enormous gap between the upper and lower classes. Breaking down these barriers was the expressed aim of a large art exhibition last month that used many means to portray the living conditions and struggles of China's millions of migrant workers.

That show was the Together With Migrants - Comrade Mingong Contemporary Art Exhibition, which ran from November 22 to 30 at the Today Art Gallery. Part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s four-year research-action project "Together With Migrants", launched in February 2002 with the intention of drawing attention to and improving the quality of life of urban migrants in China, the exhibition presented images and information on migrant workers in seven domestic cities through photographs, sculptures, video and installation works by 15 Chinese artists and research conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and UNESCO.

"This is more than an art exhibition," said curator Yang Xinyi, "it's the first time for the UN, academic institutes, artists and a private gallery to all pay attention to and take action about the social issue of *mingong* (migrant workers)."

### Rural and urban impact

The expansion of the market economy has led millions of rural young people to leave their poor hometowns and seek better jobs in dynamic metropolises such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. These waves of migrants have created new communities in these cities with their own fleeting cultures. At the same time, these transient groups have encountered many problems and put pressure on city governments. The conflicting nature of this phenomenon is an ideal source of inspiration for artists.

Xing Danwen's photographs record the motion of migrant workers in the construction of Beijing's National Theatre. The massive scale of her shots emphasizes the grandeur of the proj-



In Song Dong's performance work *Together with Migrants*, a team of 64 shirtless workers tied together at the waist with elastic cords slowly marched past another group of around 70 workers lined up against the hallway windows at the Today Art Gallery on November 22.

Photo by Irene

ect, the workers appearing like ants milling among the equipment, steel and concrete, but their importance to the creation of the structure is clear.

Other artists put more emphasis on the feelings of change, loss and hope at the heart of migrant communities. In the photograph series *The Cruel Diary of Youth*, *the Dusk of Gods* taken by Yang Yong in Shenzhen in 2000, the artist asked some local construction workers to pose atop concrete blocks set on the empty lots where they would be among the crew constructing new residential buildings. He then shot their portraits with other towering new structures in the background.

"We are all like peasant workers in this fast-changing era, experiencing the constant physical and spiritual impact of development," said sculptor Liang Shuo. The works in his outstanding series *Fashionable Peasants: Eight Brothers and Migrant Workers in the City* were scattered throughout the exhibition. The life-like fiberglass sculptures are very evocative and emphasize the hu-

manity in the anonymous faces of the millions of Chinese migrant workers.

Performance artist Zhou Wen-hong was not satisfied with simply observing his subjects, he wanted to take an active part in improving their knowledge of art and participation in city life. In June 2000, he invited 20 migrant workers to an exhibition of oil paintings by Salvador Dali at the China Art Gallery. The workers' mixed reactions and the overall experience are recorded in Zhou's installation piece *Inviting Migrants to a Dali Painting Exhibition at the China Art Gallery*.

### Performance art or patronizing exploitation?

Perhaps the greatest highlight of the show came on its opening day, when artist Song Dong led 200 migrant workers from three local construction sites to perform in a piece entitled *Together with Migrants*.

First, he stood four workers in the gallery elevator, around 20 along the staircase and others at the entrance to the exhibition on the third floor so that all visitors

would have to pass them on their way into the show.

Then, at 2 pm, a team of 64 workers, tied together at the waist with elastic cords, slowly walked through the gallery. Midway, they passed another group of around 70 workers standing in a line along the hallway windows. All of the workers involved were bare-chested. When the walkers got to the largest exhibition hall, they followed commands blared out by Song on a whistle and began to move closer or further from each other.

"I wanted to remind people that mingong have permeated every corner of urban life and we can't simply avoid or ignore them," Song explained.

It turned out that the workers involved had only vague understandings of their task or the meaning of their actions. Nearly none had ever been to an art show or gallery before, unless it was one they built, nor had any time to try to develop an appreciation of art. And yet they ended up at the center of an artistic creation.

Of course, they may have been in it for more financial than artistic motivations, as each worker willing to bare their chest on that cold November afternoon was promised payment of 30 yuan and a warm lunch.

Reaction to Song's piece was mixed. "Aside from connection, the rope represents impassable distance between people and also stands for social order. The artist admits its existence and tries to communicate with the other side of the rope," said Huang Ping, vice director of the social research section of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and leader of the UN's "Together with Migrants" project.

Critic Chen Lusheng, an outspoken opponent of extreme performance art (see "Crossing the Line from Art to Offense" in the March 12 issue of *Beijing Today*), opined, "This sets a new low for works of 'artists playing with poor people'. The employer-employee relationship between the artist and the workers in fact reveals how the workers are not able to control their own

lives. They were sent to do the job by their construction foreman."

A few young women in the audience seemed to have more superficial objections, covering their noses near the workers and walking quickly through the show. "For migrant workers, prejudice presents a greater problem than their financial difficulties or struggles to get payment for their work," added Huang.

### Making connections

Gathering mingong in a gallery and forcing audiences to observe them at close range is not a new act for Song Dong. On September 30, 2002 at the Harvest: Contemporary Art Exhibition in the China Agriculture Museum, Song brought up around 70 migrant workers from Sichuan Province and asked them to climb a two-storey high scaffold and stay there in a piece entitled *Landscape in the Vase*. In August 22, 2001, Song and other nine artists participated in a modern dance number called *Dance with Mingong*, along with 30 construction workers, at the East Modern Art Center. The dance was meant to "symbolize the workers' contributions to urban modernization and represent the relationship between urban and rural areas," Song was quoted as saying in Chen Lusheng's book, *In the Name of Art*.

In August this year, the Today Art Gallery tried to publicly raise the issue of migrant labor by erecting statues portraying mingong in a wealthy residential community in Beijing. The touchy subject matter proved too much for the residents, who quickly forced the sculptures to be taken away. One person said, "Peasants in China are great. They should be glorified, not disgraced."

"Urban residents' feelings about those people are complicated. On the one hand, they know migrant workers improve the quality of their lives by working in construction, commerce, services and sanitation. On the other hand, they are full of negative judgments about mingong," explained Huang.

Wen Pulin, director of the Dongtai Academy, a domestic cultural institute and one of the organizers of the show, told *Beijing Today*, "With this show, we have fulfilled the artist's responsibility, which is to tell people, 'Pay attention to this!'"

Sadly, after nearly 200 artists, reporters and migrant workers came together to watch and take part in the opening day of the exhibition, that much-needed attention seemed to have petered out. Last Tuesday morning, just a few days before the show closed, the third floor gallery was all but empty.

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# New Year's Movies Hit Cinemas



Ge You and Fan Bingbing in Feng Xiaogang's *Shouji*

By Dong Nan

Though there is still almost a month left of 2003, the annual deluge of fluffy New Year's movies has already begun.

First off the rank is *Baba he Wo (My Father and I)*, directed by and starring Xu Jinglei. The film, about love and growing up, won best new director award at this year's Huabiao, Jinji and Baihua film festivals.

Hot on its heels comes the latest installment in the Hong Kong gang land series, *Infernal Affairs III*, Feng Xiaogang's *Shouji (Cell Phone)*, Wong Kar-wai's adaptation of a popular Taiwan comic series, *Dixiatie (Subway)* and Ann Hui's (Xu Anhua) *Yu (Jade) Guanyin*, all

boasting all-star casts.

"My *Shouji* is not a comedy at all," insisted Feng Xiaogang in an interview with *Beijing Youth Daily* last Friday, "though it might sometimes make moviegoers burst into laughter; it deals with the serious topic of people's inner fears." Feng has released a movie every New Year since 1997, all comedies and all box-office hits.

However Zhang Yimou (*Hero*), also speaking to *Beijing Youth Daily*, opined, "A movie for New Year should be something easy and funny. There are more and more of these so-called 'New Year's movies,' but only a few of them are qualified to be included in the genre."

## Faye Wong Rewards the Faithful

By Dong Nan

Though the media seems to be more interested in stories about her and her boyfriend Nicolas Tse, superstar Faye Wong has cause to be satisfied with the sales of her new album *Jiangai (Love War)*. Released in mid-November, the album has sold one million copies in just two weeks.

More than two years have passed since Wong's last release, *Faye Wong*. The new album features ten songs in mandarin and three in Cantonese. Many of them allude to her love affair with Tse, who wrote a song titled *MV* for the album. Wong herself wrote the music for four songs and the lyrics for three.

With this release, Wong seems to be content to coast on the strengths of her earlier successes. *Jiangai* is certainly not as groundbreaking as 1994's innovative *Tiankong (Sky)* or 1996's *Fuzao (Fickleness)*. Meanwhile producer Zhang Yadong's infatuation with the Brit-pop sound is becoming stale and uninspired. But Wong's voice is still beautiful and still distinctively — Faye Wong — and that, no doubt, is reward enough for her legions of faithful fans.



## Rock Review

### Silver Ash



By Dong Nan

Colorful hair, black leather corsetry and seductive, transsexual make-up epitomize Silver Ash, perhaps China's first glam rock band.

Though their outrageous appearance always wins screams of adoration from girls (and some boys) at their gigs, and their company, Jingwen Disc, used to boast on its homepage of their "imponderable commercial potential," Silver Ash are still far from being "idols." Largely inspired by Kiss, David Bowie, the Cure and Japanese visual bands such as X-Japan and Glay, their music is guitar driven; flamboyant but with an icy feel.

Their songs dealt with the typical "outsider" themes of love, isolation and sadness, and the influence of Japanese rock bands is obvious, however their latest EP, *Never End*, marks a distinct improvement in their sound. It is certainly their most mature offering so far.

**Line up:** Vocals Ling, Bass Hong, Drum Zhen, Guitar Lucy  
*Silver Ash (2002), Never End (2003, EP)*

## Cross Cultural Piano Concert

By Dong Nan

Renowned Mexican-Chinese pianist Joel N. Juan-qui Vega gave a solo concert at the Concert Hall of the National Library of China last Friday.

In the first half, Vega received polite applause with several rondos and sonatas by Mozart, but it was during the second half that he really won over the capacity audience. Performing a series of sonatas and variations by modern Mexican composers, he visibly moved the audience with his virtuosity and passion.

Vega finished with the Chinese classic, *Hongse Niangziju (Red Detachment of Women Suite)*, a familiar melody that also won hearty acclaim.

"Since my grandfather is Chinese, I am inspired by both traditional Mexican and Chinese culture," Vega told *Beijing Today* after the concert, "In fact, I am quite familiar with Chinese history and know the story of *Red Detachment of Women Suite* very well. It makes me feel an inner passion of revolution!"

## WORLDWIDE



Justin Guarini  
**Guarini Reportedly Dropped by RCA**

Justin Guarini, the second-place finalist for the first season of *American Idol*, has reportedly been dropped by RCA.

The label, which no longer lists him on its web site, declined to comment. Guarini's eponymous debut album has sold 134,000 copies in the US, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

By contrast, the debut from first-season *Idol* winner Kelly Clarkson, *Thankful*, has sold 1.7 million copies. Second-season finalist Clay Aiken's *Measure of a Man* has sold 1.3 million copies since its release in October. (Reuters)



Mel Gibson

### Mel Gibson Delays Vatican Screening of Jesus Film

Bishops and cardinals waiting for a special Vatican screening of a controversial Mel Gibson film about Jesus Christ are going to have to wait a little longer, the Hollywood star has told them.

The select audience were hoping to have a private screening of *The Passion of Christ* on Tuesday evening as part of a convention on spirituality in film. (Reuters)

### Marilyn Manson Faces Swiss Criminal Probe

US shock rocker Marilyn Manson is the target of a criminal inquiry in Switzerland, after a religious group made a formal complaint about his stage act.

Zurich District Prosecutor Michael Scherrer told *The Associated Press* on Tuesday that the artist was under investigation for allegedly breaching

Swiss law protecting religion as well as making incitements to violence during a concert in the city in February 2001.

### (Reuters) Pascal Named Most Powerful Woman in Hollywood

Amy Pascal, co-chairman of Sony Pictures, was named Hollywood's most powerful woman on Tuesday — thanks in part to the popularity of a male superhero and other box office superhits.



Amy Pascal and Drew Barrymore

Pascal, who gave the go-ahead to produce the 2002 mega-hit *Spider-Man*, and is now preparing for its sequel, led *Hollywood Reporter's* top 100 women in Hollywood list.

"Not only has the studio hit the \$5 billion mark globally for the second straight year, but the filmmaking risks Amy Pascal takes often translate into box office success, which is a great barometer for power in Hollywood," said Christy Gross, editor of the Women in Entertainment Power 100 issue. (Reuters)

### Elvis Pictures Go on Display for First Time

Candid photographs of 1950s rock pioneers Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly and Bobby Darin, snapped by a high-school photographer and kept in storage for 40 years, went on display for the first time Tuesday.

The collection includes pictures of Elvis taken in Cleveland in 1956 when local newspapers were on strike and teen-age photographer Lew Allen showed up with a camera. Allen, then 17, was the only photographer at the concerts. (Reuters)



The King in 1956

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## Goods from China's 'Littlest' People

By Wang Xiaoxiao

It is no stretch to say that Yabu Sangka, the young proprietor of a new shop inside the Tongli Studio complex, presides over the only store in Beijing to specialize in goods made by the Jinuo minority people of Yunnan. She is, after all, one of the just around 11,000 Jinuo left in China, making them the country's littlest minority.

The store is stocked with an interesting range of clothes, hand-made embroidery and other pieces made by the owner's family. The clothing items stand out, showing an unusual amount of care for detail and use of time-tested techniques that bless them with interesting patterns and textures. A dark-colored overcoat, supposedly a one-of-a-kind, is made from a special kind of cloth called *douwen* that takes up to eight months to weave. With its hand-sewn embroidery, the coat

represents a year of total effort.

Another garment that draws ooh and ahs is a red overcoat with many little mirrors sewn onto its surface that was passed down by generations of Yabu Sangka's family and which her mother gave to her. "It's the only thing in the store not for sale. I hang it as a representation of our culture," she explained.

The latest addition to the racks is a jacket made of batik fabric that is quite contemporary and would go fine with a simple pair of jeans.

Other more practical, yet still very attractive, items include skirts wrinkled though a traditional process of pressing them under heavy stones for up to a year to make sure the creases stay, giving the skirts wonderful body and movement.

Small carpets that the Jinuo use as bedcovers are perfect for hanging on the wall or serving as exotic tablecloths. Other little pieces of Jinuo handiwork available include wallets, belts and hats.

**Where:** No. 218, Tongli Studio, Sanlitun Beijing, Chaoyang **Open:** 11 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 13051333390



Pendant, 80 yuan



Wallets

Photos by Tian Xiaotong

## Tastes of Tibet

By Shan Jinliang

Among the countless stands peddling assorted items at the Yaxiu Clothing market hides the Ommani store, a specialist in Tibetan goods.

The store was opened around two weeks ago by a Tibetan couple. "All the articles we sell are handmade in Tibet. I pick them first just as I would things for my own house," said Drolma, the female side of the duo. "Our store is a small window onto Tibetan culture and crafts."

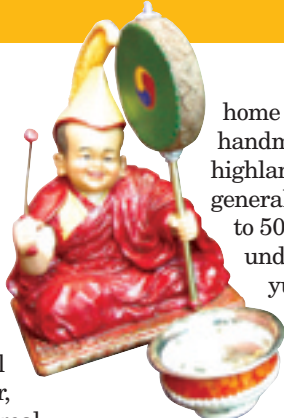
The far end of her store is dominated by a selection of striking Tibetan furniture, including chests, a coffee table

and a bed stand.

Most are weathered and beautifully painted with colorful lotus, peach and animal designs. Moreover, they are made of real Tibetan wood and crafted according to traditional methods, without the use of a single nail.

Such quality equates to somewhat high prices, smaller items like the bed stand fetching 980 yuan and larger pieces closer to 2,000 yuan.

Another part of the store is



Monk doll, 150 yuan.

home to a range of clothing, handmade from natural yak and highland sheep wool. Coats are generally priced at 400 yuan to 500 yuan a piece, while undergarments go for 100 yuan. The Tibetan fashions are rounded out by a selection of reasonably priced jewelry, mostly rings and earrings.

There are all sorts of little pieces of Tibetan life for sale at Ommani, from incense and burners to calendars, curtains, butter tea, dolls of monks and other Tibetans and ceremonial silver cups. The shelves even contain some interesting items imported from India, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines.

Drolma's husband, Sonam, said that a few of the products for sale were made by disabled Tibetans from the Tibet Jatson Welfare Handicrafts Wares Factory. The couple stock the goods as their own small way of supporting their people.

**Where:** No.1, east side of Yaxiu Clothing Market, No. 58 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang **Open:** 9:30 am - 8:30 pm **Tel:** 13801336730



Another monk doll, 150 yuan.

## Leather Pleasure

By Elva Lee

With its good facilities and prime location near the embassy district and big foreign companies, the Jiayi Market near the Kunlun Hotel is becoming a popular place to open shop. One of the most impressive stores currently operating in the market is Lao Huaishu, which sells handmade leather goods including bags, shoes, bracelets and notebooks.

Following an order from a local hotel to make 200 chairs, Lao Huaishu has started producing its own line of wood and leather furniture. Lao Huaishu's furniture has a rustic feel that emphasizes raw materials, be they roots, wheels, animal hide or rope.

Prices are in the relatively reasonably realm, with leather-bound notebooks going for 10 to 400 yuan, bags costing 100 to 500 yuan and shoes 300 to 500 yuan.

**Where:** Room 860 of Jiayi Market, north of Kunlun Hotel, Chaoyang. **Open:** 10 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6466 1187

## Artful Stitches

By Dong Nan

The Guwu Xiuhuang (Arts Embroidery) store looks like a gallery with a collection of popular works by European masters, dreamy and romantic canvases by Gustav Klimt, abstract works by Picasso, still lifes by Cezanne and the famous sunflowers of Van Gogh - that is until you take a closer look. Then it is revealed that all these works have been reproduced in stunningly lifelike embroidery.

Arts Embroidery is run by renowned painter and embroiderer Shen Deqian. His skilled work with a needle and thread is able to interpret all the hues and minor details of oil paintings, plus add their own feel of craftsmanship and a beautiful sheen thanks to the fine thread.

One of Shen's most impressive works is a reproduction of Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, sold for a tidy 500,000 yuan last year. Word has it that the artist would consider making another if the price was right.

Outside of copying the Western masters, Shen also excels in portraying ancient Chinese relics, such as lamps and blue-and-white glazed



Embroidered Mona Lisa sold for 500,000 yuan.

porcelain pieces, and wild animals, including pumas, pandas and swans.

Prices for typical sewn "paintings" run from 2,000 to 50,000 yuan, according to size and complexity. Those looking for smaller items can select the attractive, embroidered traditional bags that go for just 18 yuan each.

More personalized works can be created through the store's personal embroidery portraiture service. Finished works are so detailed and true-to-life that they look just like photographs from a distance. Prices again vary, starting at 2,400 yuan for a 15 centimeter wide by 20 centimeter long piece, and booking ahead for portraits is required.

**Where:** B1WB119, China World Mall, No.1 Jianguomen Waidajie **Open:** 9:30 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6505 6226



Photo by Elva Lee



Wine chest and book chest, 1,980 yuan each.

Photos by Che Qingjiu

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## Dai Change-Up at Goldpeacock

By Caitlin Thompson

Tucked away on Zhonguancun Nandajie is the Goldpeacock Dai Ethnic Flavor, one of Beijing's few establishments serving the foods of the Dai people and one of its best Yunnan-style restaurants. Situated next to the pricier Dai Ethnic Restaurant, this modest eatery isn't going to rock your socks off with glamour and glitz — most of the utensils are army-issue tin, and the decor is kitsch tiki hut sweating under fluorescent lights.

But no matter. Within moments of entering the restaurant, we had dishes coming and going and the attentive wait staff patiently explaining the specialties. Starting the meal off was a delicious Dai twist on coleslaw, tangy and with a healthy portion of palate-cleansing coriander, and some slightly spicy pickled bean sprouts.

Next was the chicken in bamboo, (*qingzhen zhutong ji*, 20 yuan), a sweet and light version of standard chicken soup. Despite its plain appearance, the chicken is tender and garlicky with hints of coriander and celery, and the intense broth comes close to soul food. It's more than enough for three or

four. Most beautiful is the pineapple rice, (*boluo fan*, 18 yuan) served in a majestic hollowed-out pineapple. The rice is rich and slightly sticky, perfectly complementing the spicy and nose-clearing mashed vegetables and meat (*roumo chaoheisanduo*, 16 yuan).

Among the group's favorites were the cold salad with vermicelli and dried pork salad, (*liangban sansi*, 8 yuan), a filling and savory blend of thinly sliced cabbage and rich fatty meat covered with a slightly astringent sweet vinegar sauce. This, along with the coleslaw and transcendent deep fried potato balls and hot sauce (*xiangla tudouqiu*, 8 yuan), evoked thoughts of country barbeque side dishes ala Dai.

The dud of the meal was fermented sour cabbage (*suanbaicai*, 10 yuan), an uninspired, sour and soggy mess of a dish. This sore spot notwithstanding, the Goldpeacock serves up some mean Dai food in a friendly, efficient albeit not so comely environment. Washed down with their homemade *mijiu*, slightly sweet rice wine, these dishes are a stellar change-up to everyday eating. Menu in Chinese only.

**Where:** 2 Minzu Daxue Beilu, Weigongcun, Haidian **Open:** 11 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 6893 2030 **Average cost:** 30 yuan per person

### Kitchen Confessionals



Shrimp &amp; oysters

## Diversity Is the Core

By James Liu

Malaysian cuisine is under the spotlight these days, thanks to the visits of two master Malay chefs at the Renaissance Beijing Hotel from November 17 to December 14.

Chefs Tan Lai Look and Che Rosly Bin Mamat have brought their talents and their own spices and other ingredients to make sure the Malaysians foods they introduce to local diners at the Renaissance Cafe are the real deal.

"Malaysia is home to Muslims, Buddhists and Malaysian-Chinese. Thus, the culinary tradition of Malaysia is greatly influenced by Muslims, Indian immigrants and Chinese," Tan Lai Look, from a Cantonese family that settled in western Malaysia four generations ago, told *Beijing Today*.

According to Tan, basic Malaysian food is rather simple, consisting of such main foods as fried rice with coconut milk, boiled *longdong* (rice balls) with spicy soup and stir-fried dishes.

"Malaysians just blend all the characters of different ways of cooking together. This forms the character of Malaysian food. Dishes are never too hot, too salty, too sweet, or too spicy," concluded Tan, who should know from his 16 years of professional cooking experience.

Chef Che Rosly added that emphasis is put on hot and sweet flavors, plus shrimp paste. "It's a daily necessity. Some Malaysians couldn't live without it," he joked.

A Malaysian meal usually starts with the drink *lacha*, tea with coconut milk and sugar. Last Thursday, as Chef Tan made the tea, his colleague was transforming pieces of dough into round, paper-thin pancakes by tossing them in the air. The light, delicious pancakes were then served with either soybean or



Chef Tan Lai Look



Chef Che Rosly Bin Mamat

hot and spicy sauce.

Beijing seems to have caught the two Malaysian masters a bit off guard in a few respects. "Beijing is too dry for us," said Che Rosly, a Muslim who has been suffering in this city's dry air, as he cannot drink water during the day as part of his fasting regime. They have also been surprised by the local taste for spice, in particular for the popular and now-ubiquitous dish boiled fish in hot oil, or *shuizhuyu*. "I never thought Beijingers could eat food as hot as *shuizhuyu*," Chef Tan remarked.

## Masterful Malay at Cafe Sambal

By Joel Kirkhart

Many local restaurants that specialize in Southeast Asian fare may serve up tasty food, but stray far from the mark of true authenticity. A rare exception is Cafe Sambal, a groovy little bar and restaurant tucked in a narrow *hutong* near the Drum Tower that serves Malaysian food that tastes like it was flown over fresh from Malacca.

A good starter is the plate of samosas (25 yuan), Indian-style pastries, filled with a spicy potato mixture and fried to a pleasing crisp. Other appetizer options include fried spring rolls, Vietnamese-style fresh spring rolls and somewhat pricey beef or chicken satay (50 yuan).

The menu includes a reasonable range of meat, seafood and vegetable dishes, from fancy items to simple stir-fries. The high end of the spectrum is represented by the chili curry crab and double braised Australian lobster with nyonya or lemon and garlic sauce, both offered at market prices, and the curry fish head (200 yuan). Curry is not surprisingly a major theme, flavoring fish, beef, mutton and the Kapitan chicken — nyonya curry chicken (48 yuan).

Salmon with yellow  
sauce, 65 yuanKapitan chicken,  
48 yuan

The latter has a wonderfully

thick, spicy curry sauce over

meaty chunks of tender, well-

cooked chicken.

A solid vegetable option is the fried four-sided beans with belacan and prawn (38 yuan), the beans cooked until just done and still crisp and the prawns tender, all laced with a pungent shrimp-based sauce that is delicious, but may be a bit strong for timid diners. Another good meat alternative is the assam eggs — fried eggs with sweet and sour sauce (30 yuan), in which the eggs are cooked so the yolks are still soft, perfect for breaking over the complimentary rice, with a winning, complex sauce.

The restaurant occupies an odd-shaped old building in a historic *hutong*, some of which is opened to the air in more clement weather. It is a popular spot for drinking and has a decently-priced drinks menu. But passing on the food at Cafe Sambal would be a real mistake. Although a bit pricey, it is about as authentic as non-Chinese food gets in this city.

**Where:** 43 Doufu Chi *Hutong* (just east of Juguolou Dajie) **Open:** 11 am - 12 am **Tel:** 6400 4875 **Average cost:** 80 yuan per person

# Food to Dai For

Daiwei jiaoye qingzhengyu  
(Dai-style steamed fish in  
banana leaf, 28 yuan)

## Yunnan Chic at Middle 8th Restaurant

By Xiao Rong

A relatively new entrant in the city's ranks of Yunnan eateries is the hip Middle 8th restaurant situated just off Sanlitun bar street. Its interesting fare and cool vibe draws a dedicated core of customers and others curious for a try of delicious Yunnan cooking.

Of the approximately 360 kinds of edible fungus known in China, nearly 270 grow in Yunnan. Diners can sample these delicious and nutritious, if bizarre, fungi in many varieties at Middle 8th, with *jizongjun*, *ganbajun* and fresh *niuganjun* stir-fried, steamed or boiled in soups. However, the exotic nature of these mushrooms can lead to high prices.

Other unusual flora not likely to appear at most Chinese restaurants include flower blossoms, which look beautiful and taste great. The *liangban tanglihua* (cold blossoms of pear flowers in sauce, 12 yuan) looks and tastes like dark red Sichuan peppercorns with a slightly numbing and salty flavor. Also worth trying is the *danchao molihua* (eggs fried with jasmine, 18 yuan), in which the light aroma of green jasmine proves a nice foil to the heavier eggs.

Like other local Yunnan-style restaurants, the fish options at Middle 8th are impressive. Perhaps aimed at capitalizing on this city's love for Sichuan-style boiled fish in hot oil (*shuizhuyu*), the restaurant's menu includes *Chengjiang xiangla yupian* (boiled spicy fish slices ala Chengjiang, Yunnan, 38 yuan), a similar dish that is not as numbing and extra fragrant thanks to the fried peanuts boiled with the fish. Green onions are scattered over the thick layer of red

Liangban tanglihua (cold  
blossoms of pear flowers in  
sauce, 12 yuan)Danchao molihua (eggs fried  
with jasmine, 18 yuan)

oil at the top of the dish to make it more attractive and add another subtle layer of flavor.

One of the restaurant's most popular items and a must at every table is the *mamafu qiangguo quanyu* (sauce braised whole fish, 35 yuan), a whole fish cooked crisp on the outside, tender inside, topped with glistening chili peppers. A nice mild complement to such spicy fare is the *yancai xiaoyutou* (taro steamed with pickled vegetable, 15 yuan), made with sour homemade pickles that add flavor to the soft taro.

Apart from Yunnan's famous rice noodles (*mixian*), the starch section of the menu includes a series of *zengzi fan* (rice steamed in tile jar, 12 yuan for small, 25 yuan for large) in pineapple, sweet potato or potato versions.

To wash it all down, try some of the homemade *mijiu*, or rice wine, just 5 yuan for a glass or 22 yuan for a whole jar. The light, slightly sweet-and-sour drink stimulates the appetite and helps digestion, and its miniscule alcohol content does not spell trouble for the drive or walk home.

**Where:** The Middle 8th Building, east Sanlitun, just east from the Qian Jin Gallery, Chaoyang **Open:** 11 am - 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm - 10 pm from Monday to Friday; 10 am - 10 pm weekends **Tel:** 6413 0629 **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person

Erkuai (8 yuan for  
small and 14 for  
large)Qiguoji (Qiguo chicken, 10  
to 48 yuan depending on  
size)

## Exotic Eats at Yunteng Hotel

By Dong Nan

On the whole, restaurants in Beijing run by outside provincial governments are excellent places to try genuine regional Chinese fare, and the restaurant in the Yunteng Hotel, opened and managed by the representative office of Yunnan Province, is no exception. Though easily passed by with its location in a residential area between Jianguomenqiao and Dongbianmenqiao, this establishment is worth tracking down — just look out for the red roof.

The menu includes all kinds of Yunnan specialties, with special position given to the famous cross-the-bridge noodles, or *guoqiao mixian* (8 yuan for a small order, 14 yuan for large). The dish consists of thin rice noodles served alongside slices of chicken, fish, ham, vegetables, a quail egg and a large bowl of hot chicken broth. The ingredients are dropped into the broth, cooked and then eaten.

Diners should be wary of the first bite, however, because the soup's secret is the thick layer of oil on its surface, which keeps the contents unexpectedly piping hot.

The restaurant also serves up an impressive version of another Yunnan standard, *erkuai*. The dish is made of pressed rice powder cut into delicate rhombic forms fried up with fresh pork, ham, shallots, spinach, tomato and eggs, then stewed in broth until soft. The result is rich and savory and very reasonable at just 8 yuan for a small dish or 14 for the large.

*Qiguoji* (Qiguo chicken, 10 to 48 yuan depending on size) is an original creation of the Yunnanese. The name refers to a kind of clay pot or terrine, called a *qiguo*, in which chunks of chicken, shallot and ginger are braised for four or five hours until the meat is tender and flavorful and the surrounding soup very thick.

The menu also includes a variety of dishes made of wild mushrooms native to Yunnan that are both delicious and nutritious. Prices vary from 28 yuan to 128 yuan.

**Where:** No.7 Building, Huashibeili Dongqu, Chongwen **Open:** 11:30 am - 1:30 pm, 5:30 pm - 10:00 pm **Tel:** 6711 3322 - 7105 **Average cost:** 35 yuan per person

Photos by Li Shuzhuan / Lou Ge / Tian Xiaotong





## Music

## Night of Brazilian song and dance

The National Song and Dance Ensemble of Brazil is a world class troupe, praised as "the soul of Brazilian art" by audiences worldwide. The program includes rhythmic cha-cha, hot Argentinian tango, the fishermen's dance, and of course, samba!

**Where:** Beizhan theatre, 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie **When:** December 5, 7:30 **Admission:** 180-580 yuan **Tel:** 6835 4455

### Tsai Chin on stage

Pop star Tsai Chin has fans in both China's mainland and Taiwan, and many young people have grown up with her music. This is an opportunity to see her up close and live.

**Where:** Capital Gymnasium, 54 Baishiqiao Lu **When:** December 12, 7:30 **Admission:** 120-1000 yuan **Tel:** 8315 6358



### Romantically distinguished

Oriental Troup's evening party of eastern song and dance, titled Romance and Distinguished, will be staged at Poly Theatre.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, Dongzhimen Waidajie **When:** December 12 to 22, 7:30 **Admission:** 100-1200 yuan **Tel:** 6506 5345

### Philharmonic concert

The China Philharmonic Orchestra is a first-class symphony orchestra in China and even Asia. This performance, under the baton of Huan Xiaotong, includes excerpts from Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream; Prokofiev's Symphony No. 4 in C major, Mozart's Jupiter Symphony and Brahms' Symphony No. 4 in E minor.

**Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park. **When:** December 5, 7:00 **Admission:** 120-580 **Tel:** 6559 8285

### Odes to Mao Zedong

December 26th is the 110th anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong. A concert by the China Opera Theatre and the China National Symphony Orchestra presents songs that were popular in Mao's time, including *The East is Red* and *Chairman Mao, the Red Sun in Our Hearts*.

**Where:** Grand theatre of nationalities, west of Xidan **When:** December 5 **Admission:** 80-480 yuan **Tel:** 6602 2530

## Movies



### My father and I

Telling the story of a father and daughter, this film won director and star Xun Jinglei best new director awards at two of China's major film festivals this year.

**Where:** Huaxing Theatre, **When:** from December 5 **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6261 2851

## Sports



### Free combat championships

World champions of various martial arts take one another on for the mantle of "world champion of free combat."

**Where:** Worker's Gymnasium **When:** December 7, 7:30 **Admission:** 80-1800 **Tel:** 6804 9293

### Short-track speed skating world cup

The highest level of short-track speed skating, 101 athletes from Canada, the US, Japan, Poland, Australia, New Zealand and China will compete.

**Where:** Capital Gymnasium, 54 Baishiqiao Lu **When:** December 5-7 **Admission:** 10 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888



## Jams

### Mad festival

After three years' silence Wheat and Wei are back. Lead singer Maizi is not only a rock star, but also a poet and painter. Also on stage, Bitter Belief, and Yaksha.

**Where:** Unnamed Plateau, Yayuncun Anhuili Yiqu 14 **When:** December 6 **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6489 1613

### JJ's 9th anniversary celebration

A crazy night of unrestrained melody and hot dancing at one of Beijing's oldest discos.

**Where:** Xinjiekou Beidajie **When:** December 7, 8 till late **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6618 9305

### Second Hand Rose

From the northeast of China, the Rose's special brand of cross-dressing rock always guarantees a top night out.

**Where:** Beizhan theatre, Xizhimen Waidajie **When:** December 13, 7:30 **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6835 4445

## Stage

### Time to sing

Handel's *Messiah* is for many, an essential part of Christmas. The International Festival Chorus will stage the sing-along, lead by conductor Andrew Nethisingha.

**Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall, in Zhongshan Park. **When:** December 6, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 90-380 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

## Exhibitions



### Mysteries of the pyramids

A collection of Egyptian national treasures will go on show in China's National Museum on December 5. This is the first exhibition of ancient Egyptian historical relics to be held in Beijing, and a number of the 143 exhibits are leaving Egypt for the first time ever.

**Where:** China National Museum, east side of Tian'anmen Square **When:** till January 5 **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 6512 8901



### Modern Chinese New Year's paintings

A series of humorous paintings

created with modern techniques by artists Lili, Wang Luxia, Liu Chunming.

**Where:** Qin hao Gallery, 1-1E Huaweili **When:** December 11 to 31 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0661



### Dawn of Rome

An exhibition of Etruscan relics shows why this ancient civilization has had such a distinctive impact on modern architecture and design.

**Where:** Museum of the Chinese Millennium Monument **When:** till February 28, 2004 **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6857 3281

### The Labyrinth Of The World Is So Beautiful ...

This exhibition is about visions and interpretations of the eternal myth in contemporary Czech printmaking, organized by embassy of the Czech Republic.

**Where:** Beijing Jintai Art Museum, Chaoyang Park **When:** 10 am - 4 pm, December 10-21 **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 6501 4984



### Expression for Christmas

This exhibition gathers the work of more than ten modern artists especially for Christmas. Works by Huang Yan, Lu Peng, Sheng Qi and others.

**Where:** Red Gate Gallery. **When:** till December 30 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6525 1005

### Deep Meditation

A solo exhibition of recent works by Wang Dongwei. The artistic language is abstract and pure.

**Where:** Beijing Xirui Art Center, Chaoyang Lu jia 58 **When:** till December 10, 9 am - 5 pm **Admission:** Free **Tel:** 8576 6680 - 3002

### Commemorating Ba Jin's 100th birthday

Fifty well-known artists from home and abroad gather to mark Ba Jin's centenary, by giving special classes in painting, sculpture and calligraphy. Ba Jin is one of the pioneers of modern Chinese literature. His works have been translated into many languages.

**Where:** National Museum of Contemporary Literature, 45 Shaoyaoju Wenxueguan Lu **When:** till January 31, 9 am - 5 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** :8461 5522-1104



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By Dong Nan





Bright sun after snow

By Steve Lae

**Yudu Mountain**

Yudu Mountain boasts of streams that run the whole year round, a large variety of plants, steep valleys and ruins of historical relics.

Dingxiang Gou (Valley) at Wulipo is an ideal spot for hiking. Huge boulders litter the floor of the valley, and the sound of the streams that wind their way between them is amplified by the rock walls. The area receives few visitors, and is inhabited by numerous small, furry animals. Squirrels are quick to pick up nuts friendly visitors put out for them on the rocks.

There is another route, somewhat more demanding than a wander through Dingxiang Gou. Winding from Wulipo to Sanchahe Valley, this 10-kilometer limestone valley is lined with strangely formed rocks on either side. Once snow falls here, it carpets the valley for the rest of winter, so a post-snow hike along the valley is recommended only for veteran outdoor enthusiasts.

**Getting there:** Take the Badaling Expressway to the exit for Badaling Great Wall. Follow the road signs to Yudu Mountain. The drive takes about 70 minutes.

**Tips:** It is even colder at Yudu Mountain than it is in Beijing! So take adequate food, a kerosene stove for boiling water, and plenty of warm clothes with you.

**Nearby:** Yeya Hu (Wild Duck Lake), a fifteen-minute drive to the north west of Yudu Mountain, is actually a corner of Guanting Reservoir, and as the name suggests, a perfect spot for bird watching. Fishermen from Shandong and Inner Mongolia pitch their tents along the bank of the reservoir, where they are assured good catches all year round.

After hiking at Yudu Mountain, pitch your tent by the lake for some early-morning bird watching the next day.

**Tips:** You can rent a motorboat from locals at the entrance to the reservoir. They also offer horses for a riding trip along the banks of the reservoir.

**Feilong Gu (Flying Dragon Valley)**

Vertical cliffs on either side of the valley and white clouds bisected by the cliffs are popular subjects for the photographers that visit this valley.

On cold winter days, the frozen waterfalls here are a popular destination for Beijing's ice-climbing enthusiasts. The largest of these, Beigaoquan Waterfall, creates a spectacular view in winter.

**Tips:** Take warm clothes, as the temperature around the frozen waterfalls is extremely low on winter days.

Ice-climbing here is not recommended for novice climbers.

**Getting there:** Drive along the Beijing — Shunyi expressway Highway to Pinggu. From there, it is another 10 kilometers to Huzhuanglukou, the valley is nearby. Alternatively, take bus 918 from Dongzhimen to Huzhuanglukou, and another bus to the valley.



# Winter Walks

For a dedicated few, winter's sub-zero

temperatures are no deterrent to the joys of hiking. A drive out to the mountains that partially ring the capital is rewarded at this time of year with trails almost devoid of other sightseers, clear blue skies (on a good day) and any amount of bracing, fresh air.

For those who just cannot bear to stay indoors all winter, *Beijing Today* has compiled a list of winter hiking alternatives, to fill the days between admiring the autumn leaves and skiing.



Yudu Mountain

Photos by Steve Lae / Photocome



and the trail goes on...

**Ma'an Shan (Saddle Mountain)**

Another place that attracts relatively few visitors, Ma'an Shan stands behind the famous Jietai Temple, in Mentougou District.

There are numerous historical attractions scattered around the mountain, remains of Buddhist and Taoist pagodas and carved tablets.

Some ancient worshipers made caves in the rock wall, just enough space for a small Buddhist shrine and a bed. They also dug wells for water. In some caves you can find two or even more wells: if one well ran dry, the devotee had to dig another. The mountain once boasted numerous springs, however today, there is little sign of water.

At the top of the mountain is the biggest cave temple. Ash from incense offerings by worshipers has left a three-inch deep layer around the small temple in the cave. The colorful paint on the statues standing in the temple is as bright as ever.

**Getting there:** Take the subway to Pingguoyuan, then bus 931 to Jietai Temple. Next to the entrance to the temple, a narrow path leads to the mountain.

**Tips:** It is easy to find the right route to the mountain, just follow the track made by the worshipers, however, as it is quite narrow, it can be difficult to see after a fall of snow.

A 30-meter-deep cave, once used as a military warehouse, can be seen at the start of the trail, but be careful, the stone steps inside are exceedingly slippery.

**Nearby:** A Liao Dynasty pagoda at the entrance to the 30-meter-deep is carved with intricate patterns and auspicious animals. The pagoda, one of the few on the mountain that survived the Cultural Revolution, is well preserved.

A cave high above the track offers a broad, overall view of Saddle Mountain, however, to reach it, you have to scale a vertical rock wall. A tablet carved with an inscription attributed to Emperor Qianlong can be seen not far from the mouth of the cave.

**Incense road at Yangtaishan (Balcony Mountain)**

The Empress Dowager Cixi ordered the construction of the incense road for her incense-offering tour. In 2002, she spent one tenth of the state's annual revenue on its construction. Thus the 40-kilometer stretch of road became known as the "Golden Road."

Many Buddhists today still walk along the incense road at least once every season of the year.

Spring water from the old Jinxian Nunnery is said to be effective in curing some diseases and purifying the soul. Locals visit the nunnery and take back the spring water in plastic containers.

**Getting there:** Take bus 346 from the Summer Palace to Beianhe. Walk west for 20 minutes along the path towards the village of Beianhe to the entrance of Jiu Feng. A railway line runs before the entrance. Beside the railway, a narrow path leads to the entrance to Yangtai Shan, the starting point of the hike.

**Tips:** The end of the incense road is at Niangniang Temple, at the top of Miaofeng Mountain, in Mentougou District, however, most hikers stop at Miaerwa, bordering Mentougou and Haidian districts, then walk back.